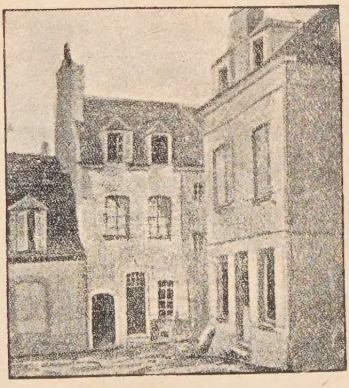

JOIGNY

Birth-place of Madeleine Sophie Barat, now a convent of the Sacred Heart.

LIFE OF

THE VENERABLE
MADELEINE LOUISE SOPHIE BARAT

FOUNDRESS OF THE SOCIETY
OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

1779—1865

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION BY THE REV. REGINALD COLLEY, S.J.

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The Venerable Mother Madeleine Sophie Barat
From a drawing taken after death.

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Reginald Colley, S.J.

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LIFE OF THE

VENERABLE MADELEINE LOUISE SOPHIE BARAT

INTRODUCTION.

A WELL TTEN Life of a Saint is a most valuable help to us. It shows us in detail how our Lord's example and teaching can be applied to our daily lives. It teaches us how the highest ideals of the age to which the Saint belonged, were shown forth in the career of a special servant of God, in whom they were perfected and supernaturalised by the guiding and controlling grace of God. It is part of the Holiness of the Church that our Lord never leaves her without these special witnesses, m[illegible] indeed hidden away in the lowliest and most [illegible]ly employments, helping us mainly by the power their prayers ; others called to do a great work for [illegible], to "fill up those things that are wanting of the [illegible]ngs of Christ," to influence many by their labours, [illegible]ny more by the [illegible]ver of their example.

In this last [illegible] view, saints of our own day are [illegible]cially useful to us. We can see them living and wo[illegible]g in the same state of society as ourselves, amid the [illegible]me prejudices and difficulties which we have to face. Their spirit will, in many secondary points, differ from the spirit of holy persons in other ages, and it will teach us how to apply in detail to our own lives the unchanging principles of the Gospel teaching. It would be hard to find this truism more vividly set forth than it is in Madame Barat's life. She shows us how the spirit of our own century, the spirit of revolution and independence, can best be met. She was indeed called

out of the world, in a way that the generality of readers of her life are not called. But for all that, her vocation was in the world. She had to deal with all classes of people who were living in the midst of the world and tossed on its billows ; and though a large part of her work was the training of her own daughters in religion, yet this very training was meant to make them more fitted to do our Lord's work, by bringing nearer to His Sacred Heart all those who came within the reach of their influence. Happily, we have abundant materials in the recollections of those who have known her and in her letters, for a full biography of this great servant of God. No doubt some will be frightened by the size of the present book. They will be inclined to ask why Mother Barat's children should not have been satisfied with the original English life ; why they have supplanted the existing biography by one so much more detailed. It should not be difficult to answer this objection in this time of ponderous Lives and Recollections. It would be hard to find among the heroes of recent biographies one whose work has spread so far and reached so deep as Mother Barat's. And when we remember that happy circumstances have made it possible to give us a good knowledge of her interior life, it would certainly have been an act of cowardice in her daughters not to have faced the labour and risks involved in giving us so thorough a life as this is. The life is not a mere outline. In parts it is very full and complete. But a careful perusal will convince most readers that there is nothing in the work which could be omitted without more or less seriously impairing the portrait

given us of Mother Barat, or the picture of the mysterious ways of God's providence in leading her work to success amid so many trials, disappointments, and failures. In the history of her difficulties from within and without, we cannot fail to notice the remarkable analogy between her career and the story of all the founders of Religious Orders, from St. Benedict onwards.

Another important lesson to be drawn from this Life should be alluded to here. No reader can help being struck by the glorious ideal that Mother Barat puts before her children in the matter of education. We talk about the "Training of teachers," but what elaborate methods, what poring over Rousseau or Herbart, can form a real teacher, a trainer of youth for the life before them, like the high ideal so powerfully inculcated on her children by this true educationist? She was a practical woman, and she never dreamt that the very noblest supernatural life would of itself be sufficient to make her religious efficient teachers in this age of ours. She meant them to learn the best of methods, she meant them to be themselves well-educated in proportion to the work before them. All this is insisted on, and Mother Barat's clearly expressed wish on this subject is of itself a guarantee that her children will not be slow to use all the opportunities that offer themselves. But, thank God, the foundress of this great teaching Congregation gives the Catholic body a much higher guarantee of a really excellent education. Her main care is far above the sphere of Syndicates and Examinations. All these helps must be used indeed, according to times and needs. But the great work is to train children to become good mothers,

devoted wives, centres of good Catholic influence. Where shall we find better expressed than we find it in Mother Barat's precepts the high ideal put before us by Bishop Hedley? "A teacher of young boys must not only be a good man, but he must be a man trained in goodness. He should be a man who is not only desirous of leading his pupils to God, as far as lies in his way, but one who has had some sort of a 'novitiate,' is more or less matured in self-restraint, in patience and in humility, and is thoroughly conscious of the respect which is due to innocence, and of the peculiar heinousness of scandal to little ones. . . . If the teacher is worldly, or even if he is only callow in Christian philosophy and ignorant in spiritual discipline, mischief will make its appearance, even in a lesson of Virgil, and moral harm will be done even in the most rarefied atmosphere of mathematics." *

Could we find anywhere a better guarantee of Bishop Hedley's ideal being carried out than Mother Barat's life puts before us?

It has been a great pleasure to me to read through this biography, which seems to me eminently fitted to do great good to any who read it carefully. For it raises us to a higher atmosphere, and produces some of that effect which the words of the holy woman produced on those who had the privilege of conversing with her in life.

REGINALD COLLEY, S.J.

Stonyhurst, January 14, 1898.

* Bishop Hedley in *Merry England*, No 133, August, 1894, pp 249, 250.

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CHAPTER I

PEACEFUL DAYS. 1779–1793.

Such are the feelings with which men look back on their childhood, when any accident brings it vividly before them. Some relic or token of that early time, some spot, or some book, or a word, or a scent, or a sound, brings them back in memory to the first years of their discipleship, and they then see what they could not know at the time, that God's presence went with them and gave them rest. . . . They think it is those very years they yearn after, whereas it is the presence of God which, as they now see, was then over them, which attracts them. — NEWMAN.

ON the banks of the Yonne, about ninety miles south east of Paris, lies the quiet little town of Joigny in Burgundy. It is on the railway from Paris to Lyons, but few of the fast trains stop at the station. "*Il n'y a rien à voir là-bas*," said a sleepy official at the *Gare de Lyon*, as, early one morning last summer, he examined some passengers' tickets for Joigny.

The way lies through quiet, fertile country past the forest of Fontainebleau, and, further on, the picturesque old city of Sens with its beautiful cathedral; when Burgundy is reached the scenery is less flat and more wooded.

The station at Joigny is a few minutes' walk from the town, and a long, somewhat dreary, avenue of poplars interspersed with modern houses leads from it to the bridge across the river. But when the bridge is reached, all that is left behind and before us is Joigny, scarcely changed from what it was a hundred and twenty years ago. The placid, peaceful Yonne flows tranquilly below, and the town, crowned by the parish church of St. Jean, rises before us, a mass of steep-pitched, dark red roofs against a back-ground of trees and hilly, vine-clad slopes.

The impression given by the place is that of a good-sized, old-fashioned town, with no business except a not very brisk wine trade, and no life except what is brought by the regiment quartered there.

The bridge leads directly to a steep and narrow street of picturesque, timbered houses, whose aspect can have changed very little in the last hundred years. Several houses in Joigny, with their fantastic, gabled roofs, date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the ruins of the old castle built in the tenth century, as well as the tower of the same date, attest that it was an important stronghold in days gone by. One of the most curious relics of the past is the large corner house in the rue Montant au Palais, called the House of the Tree of Jesse because the twisted timbers that support it are quaintly arranged into this form and terminate in carved figures under the overhanging eaves. An old wooden image of our Blessed Lady with the Divine Child in her arms stands against the wall of this house which was one of the few that escaped a conflagration that destroyed a large portion of the town in 1530. For two hundred years after this destructive fire a commemorative procession passed through the streets of Joigny on the 12th of July, the anniversary, praying that the town might for the future be preserved from such calamities.

After walking for a few minutes up the Grand' Rue, as the steep street opposite the bridge is called, a turn to the left leads into another and narrower street, out of which we pass into the Rue Davier, formerly known as the Rue du Puits-Chardon, and here at the end of the last century dwelt Jacques Barat and his wife Madeleine, whose maiden name was Foufé. The house they lived in with their children is still standing and is now the property of the Society of the Sacred Heart, whose foundress, the Venerable Madeleine Louise Sophie Barat was born there.

The Rue Davier of all the quiet streets is one of the quietest, and the *Maison Barat* is, like all the other houses, small and white, with three floors, and two rooms on each floor, a mere artizan's dwelling, with small windows and a low

door. Of the two rooms on the ground-floor, one was used as a workshop, and the other as kitchen and sitting-room for the whole family. A narrow, wooden staircase leads to the first floor where were the two best bed-rooms. A dressing-table with a small looking-glass attached to it still stands, as it stood when Mother Barat was a child, in the room occupied by her parents. Adjoining is "the children's room," where she and her sister slept during the earliest years of her life, and it was probably here also that she was born. This room was afterwards occupied by her brother Louis.

The third floor consists of a mere garret, but it is the most interesting part of the house, for Mother Barat occupied it during the whole of her girlhood. At one end, a little window looks out upon the steep street below, and the view is quite unchanged since her day. The parish church of St. Thibault stands at a short distance, and not only its somewhat massive tower bearing a statue of the saint, but the roofs of the neighbouring houses and the very cobbles in the street below are the same as they were then. Opposite the window is an alcove or recess where her bed stood. It is now fitted up as an oratory and contains among other things a *prie-Dieu* used by her in Paris at the end of her life. On the wall, just above what must have been the level of her bed, a strip of the original paper still remains, saved from the hands of the good people of Joigny who carried off most of it as relics. A small fire-place is in the wall to the right of the window, and the door is opposite. Over the mantel-piece hang photographs of the Superiors General, her successors, and in a cupboard on one side is kept the model of a Carmelite's cell which she made as a child, when her great desire was to join a contemplative Order. It is a wooden box with a glass front; a bed, a small piece of carpet, a chair, and a crucifix compose the furniture, and a doll dressed in the Carmelite habit is kneeling in prayer. The clothes have had to be renewed, but otherwise it is just as she must have left it.

The front door now used by the convent is not that of the *Maison Barat*. The four adjoining houses were bought for

the convent and the work-room and day school established there so as to leave the house itself untouched. The gardens of these houses have been joined to the small plot of ground that formed the garden of the *Maison Barat* whose limits are still clearly marked. The white rose-tree at one extremity is known to have been there in Mother Barat's time.

Jacques Barat's trade was that of wine-cooper, but he was not an artizan merely. He had a vineyard of his own upon the hill slopes of Sauvilliers and Du Larry, near Joigny, and the produce of his vines, with his handicraft, enabled him to provide for all the needs of his family. He was a son of the soil, a good Catholic, patient, kind-hearted, hard-working, God-fearing; with no aspirations above his station in life, but looked up to as honourable and upright in all his dealings.

His wife was superior to him in intelligence, and had some cultivation of mind. She was sensitive and impressionable. Her education had raised her rather above her station in life and this was sometimes a cause of suffering, but her intense affection for her children made her seek in them compensation for all sorrows. Like her husband, she had deep religious convictions and true piety.

Her only son, Louis, was born in March, 1768, and a daughter, Marie Louise Madeleine, the following year. Nine years later, the expected birth of another child gave great joy to the little household, a joy which, when the child was born, was all the greater for the alarm which had preceded her birth. The fright of a conflagration in Joigny, close to the Rue du Puits-Chardon, brought on a premature confinement, and, about 11 o'clock at night on the 12th of December, 1779, a second daughter was born to Jacques and Madeleine Barat, two months before the expected time. So frail was the child that any delay in her baptism was deemed unsafe, and as soon as it was light the next morning she was taken to St. Thibault and baptized. There was no time to summon the godparents fixed upon previously. Louis Barat stood godfather, but no recollection was preserved in the family of the Marie Louise Cédor whose name appears as that of the godmother on the

baptismal register. Thus, on the feast of St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr, Madeleine Louise Sophie Barat became a child of God.*

Madame Barat, whose safety, as well as that of her child, was looked upon as almost miraculous, devoted herself with anxious care and tenderness to the preservation of the little life that had nearly cost her so dear. To her great joy, the child throve at last, and by degrees outgrew her extreme delicacy.

Her intelligence was precocious. Writing in 1832, she says: "When I was only seventeen months old I was conscious of my own existence," and she admitted having had, even from her cradle, a knowledge of God. She understood far more of what was said and done in her presence than seemed possible to those around her. She was full of fun and life, and soon became passionately fond of games, and foremost in them amongst her little playmates. At a very early age, she heard the story of the fire on the night of her birth, and it used to be the delight of the home circle to ask her, "Sophie, what brought you into the world?" that they might hear her, almost as soon as she could speak, answer demurely: "It was fire."

When she was about five years old, and playing quietly by herself in a corner of the room, a priest, who was calling on her mother, spoke with some warmth of a dispute he had just witnessed between two nuns about a proposed building. "I lost nothing of what was said," she related afterwards, "and, as I already had a religious vocation, I made up my mind I would never enter that convent." She used to cite this as a warning as to the care people should take in speaking before children.

The exuberance of life and spirits in Sophie coexisted with a great deal of judgment and common-sense, and she very early showed the practical ability she possessed so eminently later on for managing matters of business. When she was

* Only the names Madeleine Sophie were inscribed on the official register of her baptism, and it is not known when Louise was added. Mother Barat, however, never omitted to sign the three names on official documents.

six, her intelligent remarks were the great amusement of M. de L***, fiscal procurator of the neighbourhood, who was a near neighbour of Madame Barat, and often called on her for the pleasure of drawing out her little girl's shrewd remarks and ready answers. At ten years old, her mother took Sophie with her one day when she went to explain a somewhat complicated question to an attorney, and when a difficulty arose she astonished both her mother and the lawyer by the way she completed and corrected her mother's explanation, to the entire satisfaction of both.

But in these early days the warmth and vehemence of her affections were the dominant note of Sophie's character. She had a passionate love for her mother, and tried by every means in her power to make her happy and to alleviate suffering which she could not understand. Her delicate and childlike sympathy and, above all, her deep love were most grateful to Madame Barat who leant upon the child more and more as time went on, and looked forward to finding in her the joy of her declining years.

It was from her mother that Sophie learnt her first lessons in catechism and her first prayers, and we hear also of her receiving instruction from her grandfather on the mother's side, a venerable old man who, till his death, was an example of every virtue to all who knew him. She also attended the catechism classes held at her parish church. Once, about Easter-time, the priest, in instructing the children who were thought still too young to receive absolution, advised them to make an act of contrition for all their faults, adding that if their contrition was perfect God would forgive them. Upon this, Sophie stood up and began to confess her sins aloud, as the best means to ensure their forgiveness. There was a laugh, and the priest stopped her at once, but not before he had seen the touch of God's grace on a soul so simple and so frank.

An instinctive love of truth was always a marking characteristic of the child.

Sophie's answers in class were sure to be the best, but she was so short that she had to stand upon a bench to be heard.

Her small size and fragile appearance made her look younger than she was, and in her tenth year she was rejected without examination as under age by the curate who had the task of receiving children to the instructions preparatory to First Communion. The parish priest, who knew her, judged her case differently. He brought her forward for examination, and the result so plainly proved her intelligence and knowledge that she was admitted without further delay. She made her First Communion in the church of St. Thibault, where she had been baptized, in the memorable year 1789, so fraught with disaster and so ominous for France.

In the following year Louis Barat came back to Joigny. He was only eleven years older than Sophie but he had taken his office as her godfather very seriously to heart from the first. At nine years old the inclination he showed for the priesthood led to his beginning his studies, which he pursued with great ability and equal success at the college at Joigny. As he had not left his native place, neither had he lost sight of his sister in her earliest years, and he had even watched the manifestations of her character with an earnestness very unusual in a boy. He left Joigny only to pass directly to the seminary at Sens, and whenever he came back, as he did from time to time, he taught her and superintended her studies.

It showed no ordinary strength of mind to embrace the ecclesiastical career and hold steadily to his purpose at a time when such strange illusions were possessing the minds of men, and when to follow Jesus Christ openly and closely meant not only derision, but persecution and even death. Louis Barat did not flinch. He was ordained sub-deacon at the age of twenty-two and as by that time he had completed his course of studies he was sent to profess mathematics at the college of Joigny until he should be old enough for ordination to the priesthood.

His return to Joigny in 1790 was a return home, and under his father's roof he found the little sister, his little goddaughter, who always had so large a share of his thoughts and prayers. He found her all that her early promise had led him to expect.

She had her father's kind and patient nature allied to her mother's energy and keen sensibility and, for her own share, a mind of unusual power and scope, balanced by sense and tact. But these good gifts were not without their dangers and Louis Barat foresaw that whilst her lively wit might grow sarcastic, and her high spirits lead to petulance, the strength of her will might become too tenacious and the warmth and vehemence of her affections might lead her from the path traced for her by God.

With thoughts like these in his mind Louis must often have looked at Sophie and prayed God to show him what was best to do for her.

Up to this time Sophie had never been separated from her mother. She learnt from her all household duties, following her into all the details of the life of such a home as hers, and by her side she had gone year by year to the vineyards on the slopes, working with her at all that belongs to the cultivation of the vine until the vintage season when she helped in gathering the grapes. Although until now the circle of her home life bounded her horizon, she had aspirations beyond a future such as that which seemed in store for her. Without understanding its full value, she felt from the first an attraction for the life which here below is most like that led by God's angels in Heaven, and looking back afterwards she could not remember a time when she was not resolved to live for God alone in religion.

But the resolve was deep down in the silent recesses of her spiritual nature. It showed itself perhaps first outwardly in her play, for we are told that she often formed little communities amongst her playmates and was their superior. Not that she had any innate love of command; far from it, but that her character naturally led others to place her over them. Secondly it showed itself in an atmosphere of maidenliness which always surrounded her, of gentle reserve, which became even more marked after her First Communion. One evening about this time, when friends were present, Sophie was asked to read aloud, and her mother put into her hands a book of

Marmontel's *Contes*. She obeyed, but it was clear how much it cost her to read certain passages. Afterwards a friend remonstrated with Madame Barat for having given Sophie such a book, and indeed the mother had a lesson which she did not forget; the trial was not repeated.

When she was about twelve years old she was invited to spend the day with a lady of some position in the neighbourhood who had taken a great fancy to her and went so far as to say one day before her own two boys, that she would give both of them if she could have in exchange such a daughter as Sophie. In the course of the day some ill-mannered boys joined the party, but Sophie so completely kept them at a distance that she gave them no opportunity of taking any liberty. When however one of them offering her some flowers made as though he would himself fasten them into her sash she threw the little nosegay on the ground and trod upon it, saying with true scorn in her voice: "That is all I care for your flowers or for you!" The gesture and the words were all the more remarked because Sophie's manner was generally shy and gentle.

Scenes such as these Louis must have seen, and he did not doubt that God had special designs on the gifted child. He resolved to carry on the education he had begun, and that in all seriousness and earnest.

The first thing he did was to draw up for her a rule of life. She rose betimes, and went to the early Mass at St. Thibault. One morning she had overslept herself, and when her brother found she was not in church, he came home and went up to her room to look for her. She pulled the coverlet over her head, hoping to escape detection, and her mother, who did not approve of such strictness, said to Louis: "Do you think Sophie such a lazy child as to stay in bed when she ought to be at Mass?" Louis, on this was discomfited, and, thinking his quest a vain one, was turning to go, when Sophie, whose conscience could never bear a shadow of deception, called out: "I am here." Then, obeying her brother's injunction, she rose quickly and a few minutes later ran off to church.

After Mass, she retreated to the garret at the top of the house which was given up to her use. There she studied all day long, except during the hours which her brother was obliged to allow her for exercise and necessary intercourse with her family.

Her favourite walk was to the vineyard on the hill of Larry, and here she loved to look over the undulating expanse of country, and trace the winding course of the silvery and peaceful Yonne, gliding through meadow lands and vineyards, and past hamlets clustering round the spires of the village churches. In the distance, the mysterious depths of the forest of Othe seemed to her like an image of God's immensity, whilst all that was charming and lovely in the scene that met her gaze filled her heart with love for the invisible source of all this visible beauty.

Sometimes Louis would accompany her in these walks, and then they were very serious, for brother and sister had each a book. This, truth to tell, was far from suiting Sophie's taste, for she would have liked to join some merry troop of children with whom she could have laughed and sported at her ease, and from an early age an expression befitting older lips often escaped her: "Oh, is there no unmixed pleasure to be found!"

One day she heard that Louis was to be absent for a fortnight. "Now I can enjoy myself!" she thought with glee. A task was given her, but a fortnight is a long time to a child, and she put away her books, mentally resolving to think of the task only at the end of this rare holiday. To make it more delightful it was vintage time, and early on those lovely autumn mornings Sophie set off for the vineyard, and spent there the livelong day. Three days passed thus, three blissful days which she hoped were to be the forerunners of many more. But, alas! on the fourth day, Sophie's mother, who had rejoiced with her in her joy, came running to the vineyard to look for her. "Come quickly, child, come quickly, your brother has come home." It was a thunder-clap for Sophie; her little basket fell from her hands and she stood as

if petrified. Then, picking up the basket, she sadly turned her steps homewards where her brother was waiting for her with a sharp reprimand. "So I sorrowfully exchanged my basket for my books," she said long afterwards, "and as I did so, said again: Does all earth's joy, then turn to bitterness?"

Yet, by degrees the love of study grew upon her. Perhaps it was in one of those moments when she began to feel the value of time that, hearing some men singing over their work: "We have but a short time to live, boys, let us be gay whilst we may," she said to herself: "If they have only a short time to live, why do they not use it better?"

She learnt Latin and made such rapid progress in it that she was soon able to read the classics. She delighted so much in Virgil that she said of herself with an implied reproach that at one time she was "rather a Virgilian than a Christian," referring to St. Jerome's well-known dream. Her success in Latin encouraged her brother to teach her Greek, and in Homer she found an heroic ideal that delighted her. It was the remembrance of her early acquaintance with Homeric heroes and heroines that made her say in later life how she loved stories of heroism because "there at least there is room to breathe, the mind expands as it will, and the heart feels that it lives indeed."

The deep hold which these classical studies took upon her came out in various ways throughout her life. She had sometimes in Rome to speak Italian with which she was not very familiar and the sentence begun in Italian would end in Latin. "You are too much of a Latin scholar to speak Italian," some one said to her one day.

During one of her journeys through Italy in after years, a long summer's day was spent in driving along the road between Rome and St. Elpidio. The route lay near the shore of the Adriatic, and all day her eyes were as though seeking for the faint outline of the coast of Greece. "I am thinking of old times," she said, "of Greece that I loved so much when I was learning to know its poets and its heroes. I was on fire with enthusiasm for Greece, its literature and its brilliant

exploits, when victories were won by a handful of men through the power that personal bravery and spirit possess over mere numbers. How I loved Athens, Sparta, and Corinth! . . . I laugh now when I think what I went through about the Pass of Thermopylæ and the Macedonian wars. Learning is lost time unless the children take this kind of personal interest in what they read, and feel as if they were present. A time comes when all this helps them to understand the *Sic transit gloria mundi;* they will rise above their own troubles, and perhaps some day they will wish to give themselves to Him who remains immutable, without shadow of alteration in a world whose changeful nothingness they have recognized."

Learning modern languages was the reward and recreation her brother provided for her. She learnt Spanish with great ease and laughed so much to herself over Don Quixote that her mother and sister feared she had taken leave of her senses.

Besides the classics and history, Sophie studied mathematics and the natural sciences, in which Louis was particularly well versed. He gave her every week as an examination paper the exercise he prepared for his class of boys at the college, and her work was always superior to theirs. Cardinal Donnet, Archbishop of Bordeaux, when at the seminary at Sens knew some who had been amongst his pupils, and, at a visit he paid, in 1877, to the school of the Sacred Heart in his episcopal city, he spoke of this and described the vexation and secret anger with which they heard Abbé Barat say week after week when proclaiming the places: "I am sorry to tell you, boys, that Sophie is first again." (*"Je suis bien fâché de vous le dire, Messieurs, mais c'est la petite Sophie qui est encore la première."*)

If Louis Barat's inflexible will often made him a hard task-master, there was also a tender side to his character. All this study was to him the means not the end, and especially it was the means by which Sophie might be raised to the height of any vocation which God had in store for her. Far above success in human learning did he value her growing acquaintance with the science of the saints, a science the

germs of which hard trials and many a bitter experience had already implanted in his own heart, to be matured by suffering later on.

To teach his sister to love God with her whole heart became more and more his object with regard to her, and the means he used had sometimes a poetry of their own which we should not have expected to find in one otherwise so stern. We have the following from Sophie herself: "When I was a child, I once had a lamb that was very fond of me; when I called it, it came at once even leaving its food. One day it was lying quite still at my feet when my brother came into the room. He stood for a short time looking at it and then said: 'Look, Sophie, at your lamb and see what it is doing. It is *loving*.'" That was the occupation in which Sophie's life was to be spent.

Madame Barat was often puzzled to think what use so much learning would be to the child. She had no ambition for Sophie beyond that of a life like her own in Joigny, a life such as her elder daughter entered upon when in 1792 she married Monsieur Dussaussoy, a fellow-townsman of their own. Sophie's father however founded grand schemes for her future on her talents and education. God meanwhile was shaping all things to His own ends.

At the time of her sister's marriage Sophie let it be known that she did not intend to follow her example, but to consecrate her life to God in religion. Those who knew of her intention could scarcely have thought it possible she would carry it out, for at that very time the Revolution was making religious life impossible by closing monasteries and convents, and even massacring those consecrated to God, for no other reason but this very consecration. However, her intention was not discussed, for no step could be taken while she was so young even if circumstances had been other than they were. In accordance with her plans for the future she dressed very simply; generally in the Burgundian peasant costume. When some friends of her own age laughed a little at her strictness on this point, she relaxed somewhat to avoid remark, and even

powdered her hair, a vanity which she always lamented in later life. Her confessor perceiving the change, slight though it was, concluded that, after all, her vocation was for the world, and even advised her to follow her sister's example. This opened her eyes to the mistake she had made, and her dress henceforward was simplicity itself.

After her death, the Abbé Dussaussoy, the eldest of her sister's children wrote the following recollections of Sophie at Joigny. His childish admiration is easily explained when we remember that she had all the charm of manner, countenance and words with which children's hearts are so easily won. Her features were regular and delicate, her expression lively and very kind. But what told on others more than her beauty was her complete absence of self-consciousness and her utter indifference to the good gifts bestowed on her as far as their personal advantage to herself was concerned. "From the time I can remember anything at all," he says, "that is from the time I was four or five years old, I remember being fascinated by my aunt's beauty and charm, her gentleness, her gracious ways, and the musical tones of her low, sweet voice. Her image has always remained deeply engraven on my heart as that of a statue of a virgin saint, or an impersonation of that Heavenly Wisdom whose name she bore.

"I can easily understand what I have been told of her childhood, and the charm by which she won all hearts. Often during the holidays at Joigny she used to take me by the hand and together we wandered up hill and down dale through the lovely valley of the Yonne. There she would teach me about God and His love for men ; she would tell me stories suited to my age or sing to me and recite pieces of poetry. The sound of her voice and her words captivated me so completely that every fibre of my being vibrated like a musical instrument in response.

"One day especially I remember we were seated under the shadow of a spreading oak on a knoll overlooking the windings of the river. She repeated by heart some of Racine's *Athalie*, and her voice sounded to me sweeter than

the sweetest music. To my eyes she seemed inspired, and as she looked at me, the true, the good, the beautiful, became realities to me, as it were, and I drank in deep draughts of a purer and diviner air than that of earth.

"My aunt had caught, and put into a little paper cage a large and beautiful peacock-butterfly, and had given it to me to take care of. However I forgot all but her and let it fly away. She chid me gently for my thoughtlessness. The butterfly escaped but the scene never faded from my mind and now in my old age I see it over again in the dim distance of my thoughts,"

CHAPTER II

STORM CLOUDS. 1793–1799.

> Who best
> Can suffer, best can do; best reign
> Who first hath well obeyed.
>
> MILTON.

SOPHIE was in her fourteenth year, when the hitherto unbroken tenor of life in her father's house was interrupted by a period of grief and trial.

Louis Barat's return to Joigny in 1790 nearly coincided with the promulgation of the order that clerics must swear fidelity to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, a schismatical act withdrawing the Church in France from the authority of the Holy See to subject it to the "Sovereign People." Louis was a deacon, and therefore his oath was required. He yielded to the entreaties of his parents, who like himself were ignorant of the full bearing of the measure, and followed the example set him, alas, by his metropolitan, the Archbishop of Sens, the unworthy Loménie de Brienne, one of the four who, out of the hundred and thirty-six Bishops of France, proved faithless at this crisis.

The oath was taken in the church of St. Thibault before the municipal authorities, but Louis very soon regretted what he had done. Early in the following year a Brief was issued by Pope Pius VI. which left no choice between public retractation and excommunication for those who had sworn to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Louis, whose eyes were only then thoroughly opened, lost no time in writing a spirited and manly letter to the municipal Council at Joigny

retracting his oath, which he declared null and void. A postscript signified his intention of continuing to hold his class at the college as long as the municipal authorities saw fit.

For a time things went on as before, but as the virulence of the revolutionary spirit spread into the provinces, the ominous threat, "The oath or death," grew fiercer and more frequent, and Louis was advised to leave Joigny for Paris, where he could maintain himself by teaching, and live unknown and unsuspected.

The peace which this move brought him was however short-lived. The Reign of Terror was in full progress, and when, in May, 1793, he was denounced to the Government by a former school-fellow, he was thrown into one of those prisons which few left except for the scaffold.

Among the many priests who were his companions in the Conciergerie was Monsieur Emery, Superior General of the Congregation of St. Sulpice, one of the holiest and most learned men of his day. Later on, at St. Lazare, he met Monsieur Duclaux, another exemplary Sulpician, and the example and lessons of these two men made them his masters in the spiritual life.

It is easy to imagine what consternation the tidings of his arrest caused at Joigny, and there was nothing to reassure his parents in the further news received from Paris. The anguish of his mother was indescribable, and frequent domiciliary visits heightened the alarm. Her grief before long took the form of a settled melancholy, which it was feared would end by overclouding her reason. She refused all food, passed long hours in mournful silence, and was daily wasting away.

Sophie meanwhile exhausted every loving device to divert her mother's thoughts from the one sad subject which occupied them night and day. All her endeavours had hitherto ended in failure, but at last she bethought her of a plan which met with success. She remembered her mother's liking for green peas dressed in a special way. So she bought some, and, as she afterwards said herself, put all her little skill into the preparation of them. When dinner-time came, her mother as usual took

nothing, and passed on to Sophie the dishes which the latter had so carefully prepared for her. But to-day Sophie also sat with folded hands and touched nothing. As soon as her mother noticed this she took alarm, asked if she were ill or unhappy, implored her to say what was the matter. "Nothing is the matter with me," said Sophie, "but I cannot eat. I have resolved to take nothing as long as you will not; at least we shall die together." She said it so firmly that her mother was convinced. She seemed to awake from a sad dream. "Oh, in that case," she said, "we must;" and finding something that she liked, she took it and the spell was broken. Little by little her strength returned, and Sophie's gentle and loving ways upheld her through the time of trial.

Another source of consolation and courage was devotion to the Sacred Heart. Till then, Sophie's mother had kept up certain prejudices against this devotion, but Louis had sent her from Paris two pictures, one of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the other of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In spite of her old feeling and the opposition of her family, she had them framed, and they hung against the wall of her room all through the Reign of Terror. Many prayers were said before them for Louis, and Sophie traced back her own devotion to the Sacred Heart to this time.

Meanwhile Louis had been transferred from one prison to another, and was only awaiting his turn for the death which had already been the lot of eighty-five of his fellow-prisoners. Day by day the melancholy list was read, and the doomed men departed to return no more. Still the name of Barat was not heard, and he waited on.

One day he was accosted in the courtyard of the prison by a man whom he did not recognize, but who proved to be one of his former schoolmasters. The man was himself a prisoner, but had been employed on account of his good handwriting to copy the lists of each day's victims. "I passed over your name," he said, "for old acquaintance' sake, not knowing whether it was really you. Now that I know for certain, I shall do so again whenever it appears. It would go hard with me if I were

found out, but I shall take the risk." Shortly afterwards, in July, 1794, followed the fall of Robespierre, and this put an end to the captivity of those under sentence of death. Louis might have obtained immediate freedom at the cost of a slight untruth, but he preferred to prolong his imprisonment. In February, 1795, he was released and returned home.

Great was the joy with which he was welcomed at Joigny, but his own feelings were not of unmixed delight, for during his hard captivity the longing for martyrdom—so nearly within his grasp—had grown very strong within him. In default of martyrdom he thirsted for the life of a missionary in distant lands, and wished to become a Jesuit. He meditated a plan for entering the noviceship in Russia, where in spite of its suppression elsewhere the Society of Jesus still existed. But his true mission at that time lay nearer home, in the formation of his sister for her future work.

While Sophie's character had developed much under the pressure of the sorrow and anxiety through which she had passed, her wish and intention to give herself to God had not diminished, but had grown in strength by her closer acquaintance with the realities of life. The lovable qualities which were more manifest each year made her the darling of her home, and we are told that "she was made more of than if she had been a prince's daughter." Her wishes were forestalled, and her will obeyed by all. A very large share of this adulation came to her from her mother, whose maternal vanity was flattered by the praises she heard on all sides of the child whose true worth she knew better than any one else. She was to Sophie mother and friend in one, and the closeness of this relation was the great charm of life to both.

Louis did not stay long in Joigny at his first visit, but he reflected much on what he noticed there. He found that Sophie went on with her studies rather for their own sake than for higher motives, that though her piety had not grown cold, a great deal was needed before her heart could be detached from earthly things and be fixed only upon God. He found that in the atmosphere of human love, in which she lived, there

was much that could hardly fail to drag down her aspirations, and prevent her from reaching the calm heights of a life in and for God alone, where only she could carry out God's designs. Her future, her as yet unknown vocation, were at stake and all must be sacrificed to secure them. With this conviction in his mind Louis thought that the best plan for Sophie would be that she should come to live with him in Paris, if he could succeed in finding employment there that would secure her maintenance as well as his own. He spoke of this idea to his parents and to her, but the obstacles seemed insuperable, and he met with determined opposition from all except his father, who had great views for Sophie, and saw the importance of not leaving such an education as hers unfinished.

It seemed impossible to hope for her mother's consent, and without this Sophie would never go. Indeed her own feelings were directly opposed to the scheme, and Louis obtained from both Sophie and her mother little answer beyond tears and protests. He returned to Paris where he was ordained priest, and shortly afterwards began a correspondence in which he put forward strong reasons to convince Sophie that the right course for her was to join him and pursue her studies in Paris.

Sophie replied to all by the one objection that seemed to her insuperable: her love for her mother, her mother's need of her, the impossibility of leaving her. The whole correspondence has disappeared, but we know from Sophie herself what was the gist of her arguments. "I undertook to prove to him," she said once, "that he was overturning the order of nature, and that the law of charity could not sanction the separation of mother and child. I was bound to lose," she added; "I could not make out a good case and I have often blamed myself for trying to do so."

It was not "a good case," and deep in her heart was the conviction that gave an echo to all her brother's arguments. She did not doubt that God wanted her whole heart, she did not doubt that dear as were those chains of home affections they must be broken through, if her soul were to be free to

follow the plan of God's grace; only—how could she leave her mother? Could God ask this?

Things were thus at a dead-lock when Louis came back to Joigny to plead his cause once more. The father now quite took his side. He thought Sophie was losing her time where she was, and that a better, higher lot than her fathers' might be in store for her if this opportunity were not missed. Even her mother now began to look differently on the proposal and having once admitted the idea as a possibility it grew upon her more and more. Sophie would be quite safe in Paris with Louis, and he would be less lonely if she were with him. But her consent was only obtained on condition that Sophie came back every year at vintage-time to spend some weeks at home.

So it was arranged, and when the Abbé Louis returned to Paris, his little sister was with him.

One of Sophie's friends, a young girl about her own age, was also going to Paris at this time, and travelled with Sophie and her brother. The journey took three days and nights, so slow was the pace of the lumbering old coach. The girls would have cheered their sad hearts and beguiled the way with conversation, but their companion repressed them, saying all gaiety was unseemly in those who were nearing the gates of a city whose streets were still red with the blood of martyrs, and where religion was still proscribed. Recollection and silence would befit them better. Sophie foresaw from this that the school which she was about to enter was an austere one and she did not forget the lesson.

The road to Paris lay through Conflans, and once when Sophie in after years was standing in the garden of the noviceship there, looking on the Seine and the steamers passing up and down, she said to those around her: "I remember my first arrival in Paris by the Joigny coach in my print frock and frilled collar. I do not know whether I looked at this house, but who could have imagined I should one day buy it in the name of a religious community?"

Louis had secured a suitable home for his sister and himself with an elderly maiden lady, named Duval, who took charge

of Sophie. Her house was 2, Rue de Touraine, in the Quartier du Marais. It is now 4, Rue de Saintonge. She fully appreciated the privilege of having a priest under her roof, and a room was fitted up as a chapel, where the Abbé Barat said Mass every day in secret. "We had a very pretty little chapel in the Rue de Touraine," Mother Barat said once, many years afterwards, "and a large room adjoining opening into it, which was convenient when people came. There was a fine picture of the Sacred Heart and in front of it a statue of our Blessed Lady. On the wall at the side hung a picture of the Madonna and Child which is now at our convent in Paris." There was also a picture of St. Ignatius and his companions making their first vows in the chapel at Montmartre.

A life of study, prayer, and mortification began for Sophie when she took up her abode in the Rue de Touraine. She entered on it full of desires to use her life to the utmost for God, but quite ignorant of the vocation to which she was called.

She soon found that her previsions as to the austerity of Louis' views concerning her were to be realized. Her time was planned out by him; study and needlework occupied the greater part of the day, but some hours in the week were given to teaching. She had a little pupil called Laura, of whom she was very fond and whose memory was always dear to her, and she also gave instruction in Christian Doctrine to some other children living in the same part of Paris. She never went out but on some useful errand, and there was little to vary the monotony of life.

A few friends of Mdlle Duval used to come secretly to share the privilege of hearing Mass, a happiness of which they would otherwise have been deprived in those sad times; we are told that Abbé Barat used to give them instructions, and they put themselves under his direction. As their desire was to consecrate themselves to God, he allowed them to join Sophie in her studies, that later on they might be able to do more good. This involved a considerable exercise of patience for Sophie, for to conceal his sister's superiority and enable her companions to keep up with her, Louis held her back as

much as possible in these common studies. Sophie saw through the device, but though she suffered from it she made no complaint.

Louis at this time so far changed his sister's plan of studies as to exclude from it the profane authors whose writings had been such a delight to her, and to cultivate in their stead her taste for sacred literature and the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. "One day," she says, "Louis brought me a huge folio volume in Latin to translate. I opened it, and I found that it was a theological treatise containing many words quite strange to me. I pleaded ignorance and said I could not translate what I did not understand. 'You are an obstinate girl,' he answered; 'do as you are told.' I was obliged to obey, but it was very difficult work. I have read also many of the writers on mystical theology. I found in them all that we must be long exercised in abnegation and mortification before we can experience the favours of Heaven, and I said to myself: Since all this is necessary before these favours are conferred, what need is there for me to know about them now."

Abbé Barat drew a different conclusion from the principle Sophie had discovered in the mystical writers, and he acted upon it to the letter. To teach her the value of this path of self-renunciation and sacrifice was at that time his great aim in life, and he spared neither his sister nor himself to carry it out fully. When Sophie first came to Paris, her director was the Abbé Philibert de Bruillard, still a young priest, but full of zeal for souls and of intrepid fortitude. During the Reign of Terror he had remained in Paris, and had over and over again risked his life to secure the grace of a last absolution to those about to die on the scaffold. *

Under his direction Sophie obtained much light as to God's

* Mgr. Philibert de Bruillard for 25 years Bishop of Grenoble, died in 1860, aged 95 years, at the convent of the Sacred Heart at Montfleury, near that city. He always had the greatest esteem and admiration for his former penitent. In 1853, Mother Barat consulted him about her great wish to retire from the post of Superior General, but using his old authority as her director, he ordered her to remain in the position in which God had placed her. "You owe me your Mother General twice over now," he said afterwards to the Superior at Montfleury.

designs for her, but circumstances did not allow her to continue long under his guidance, and her brother then became more than ever the arbiter of her fate. Though brother and sister were equally imbued with the spirit of faith and equally determined in the pursuit of good, never did the contrast between them on other points come out more strongly than now when the closeness of their relations brought them together at every step of life.

The hard school of captivity had not softened Louis' character, and the more inflexible his will appeared, the more did the gentleness, the submissive humility and docility of Sophie become manifest. If Louis saw that she liked what she was doing, or that any thing was a pleasure to her, he required her to make the sacrifice of it for a time or altogether. She had only to show any preference for one occupation over another to be certain that it would be forbidden her. One day he burnt some fine work that had cost her hours of toil and which she meant to be a present for him. On another occasion, the same fate befell a dress which she had made for herself to replace the Burgundian costume which she had brought with her to Paris, and which she was obliged to wear in spite of its peculiarity. These and similar trials cost her tears at first, but as time went on they lost their sting, and she laughed at what she had once wept over.

From the time the Abbé de Bruillard ceased to be her director, her brother's guidance extended even to matters of conscience. Sophie's confidence in him grew as their daily intercourse showed her how faithfully he himself practised what he taught, and as she experienced the results of his zeal for her spiritual progress. She seconded his efforts by the most complete openness.

If Louis had been more experienced he would have known that a soul like hers did not require severity, and that his zeal far exceeded the bounds of prudence. Their manner of life was in itself austere and hard ; dry bread was often their only food, and Sophie added severe penances to the privations which poverty entailed upon her. She frequently slept on the floor,

and fasting, watching, and disciplines wore her to a shadow. After the foundation of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Louis sent to some of the first religious a girdle of iron chain which his sister used to wear at this time, and with it a couplet of his own :

> My soul is free though chains my limbs enfold.
> Earth's iron fetters are in Heaven pure gold.

At a later time he recognized his mistake with regard to her, and told her how deeply he regretted it before God.

Great perplexity and anxiety of mind were soon added to all that Sophie had to bear. At her brother's wish she made a general confession to him, and innocent as her past life had been, this confession and others that followed it were a source of much suffering. One minute examination of conscience was followed by others, until, as her fear of displeasing God by the slightest faults increased, Holy Communion became more and more difficult to her. She trembled at the thought of her unfitness, and had not Louis' will prevailed, she would have remained away from the Holy Table. He would not suffer this however, and if at the moment of Communion he saw her hesitate to approach the altar, he would even call her by her name and bid her come. *

Sophie always obeyed except on one occasion, when, foreseeing what would occur, she had, child as she was, broken her fast before Mass, to put it out of her own power to receive Communion. However she was punished for this act and never repeated it, for Louis would not yield until she had owned the reason that kept her away.

Little by little, Sophie acquired so much self-mastery by bearing with unfailing sweetness so many contradictions and trials, that she ceased to be affected by them as she was at first. When one of her companions remarked with surprise upon her constant cheerfulness, she said : "If pagans could make great sacrifices for the sake of their own glory, cannot I bear crosses for the sake of the God of Heaven whom I

* It must be remembered it was a private chapel, and those present were all personal friends.

serve?" It was not stoicism, however, but love that was the secret of her serenity. The love of God grew rapidly in her soul, and she learned to love the sufferings that united her heart to that of our Lord. Love too was establishing her more and more in that humility which throughout her life was the special stamp of her sanctity. "You will never be a great saint, Sophie," her brother used to say to her, and in her heart she answered: "At least, then, I will take my revenge by being very humble. Humility shall be my only device for pleasing God." Her desire was to be a Carmelite lay-sister, and this desire was strengthened in her as she saw and understood more of the treasure hidden in a life of obscure and humble labour, joined to unbroken prayer.

But this wish ran counter in her heart to another, the desire for an apostolic vocation enkindled by reading the lives of St. Francis Xavier and other great servants of God. She could not yet foresee that both the life of contemplation and the life of action were to be combined for her in the vocation for which she was being prepared.

CHAPTER III

FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART. 1800.

Oh, let Thy sacred Will
All Thy delight in me fulfil!
Let me not think an action mine own way
But as Thy love shall sway,
Resigning up the rudder to Thy skill.

G. HERBERT.

IN the summer of 1800, Sophie went as usual for her holidays to Joigny, and shortly after her return she wrote the following letter, so straightforward in its simplicity, to her sister. It is the first of her letters that remains to us.

J. M. J. Paris, Oct. 10th, 1800.

I am much grieved, dear Sister, to hear how ill you are. My last letter was so hurried that I forgot to inquire for your health, but I was none the less most anxious about it. I feel for you more than I can say, for I know how much you suffer and how weak you are. I trust you will not be ill long; if you get stronger and do not dwell on sad thoughts you will suffer much less. You must consider that these troubles are a necessary consequence of the state of life in which God has placed you. Turn them to good account; make them meritorious by leading a truly Christian life and bearing all with patience. Human consolation is vain and insufficient, and I will not offer it to you. Make religion your true comfort and take advantage of your state to give a little more to God. You would soon find that by making an effort one can do even difficult things. Believe me, I speak from my own experience, for although I have not your trials, I have some of my own, and the efforts I have made, slight though they be, have always brought me great comfort. Trust in

God and He will help you. It is time you should respond to His call. I see He is asking you for something more than what you give Him every day. The afflictions with which He tries you prove it. Let me share your sorrow, whatever it is. I feel so much for you, and if it were possible I would so willingly bear half your burden. The time will come when I shall do this, but meantime God wishes you to bear the whole weight. It will not be for long. Do not lose the blessings He has in store for you in His merciful Providence, but make yourself worthy of all by corresponding with His grace and neglecting nothing to make the little ones whom He has confided to you grow up in His knowledge and love. They are not your own, but a trust from God. He will require an account of them from you, be sure of this. You are not forsaken in your needs as a mother. God, who knows all, gives you friends who will help you.

Write to me when you have a spare moment. Tell me your hopes, your fears, all that is in your heart, — especially tell me about the children. I will try to answer though I have little time. Kiss all the children for me, and believe me always your very loving friend and sister,— SOPHIE BARAT.

The autumn of 1800 was a turning-point in Sophie's life, and one sentence in the letter just quoted shows that a new horizon was opening out before her.

In June of that year, there arrived in Paris from Germany three priests belonging to a Society lately established upon the basis of the Society of Jesus. They were known to the Abbé Philibert de Bruillard, and through him made acquaintance with Louis Barat, who found in their Society that of which he had long been in search, the means of living a more perfect life under the Rule of St. Ignatius.

But it was not alone for Louis Barat's sake that Father Varin and the other Fathers of the Faith, as they were called, had been providentially led just at that juncture to Paris. One day when Father Varin and Louis were talking together, Louis, in answer to a question as to whether any tie bound him to the world, mentioned that he had a little sister. This fact was of very great interest to Father Varin, but to explain why it was so we must go back a little further into his history.

Among the priests whom the Revolution drove from France

was the saintly Léonor de Tournély, a man full of the love of God and zeal for souls. He sought refuge in Germany, and founded there with some former companions of his at St. Sulpice a little society of priests who took the name of "Fathers of the Sacred Heart." They followed as nearly as possible the Rule of St. Ignatius, and hoped one day to re-establish the Society of Jesus. The object nearest to de Tournély's heart had been to repair as far as possible the disasters of the Revolution by providing means of Christian education for the rising generation in France. The work of the education of boys could be undertaken by the Fathers of his Society, but the future wives and mothers had also to be trained, and as long as this need was not met de Tournély felt that his work was hardly begun. As time went on, God showed him in prayer that his Society was to be the means of organizing a "Society of the Sacred Heart," a society of religious women to whose hands God meant to entrust not the mere duty of Christian education, although that would be much, but the very censer with the sacred fire of His love for men to cast it upon the earth — a Society with a two-fold spirit of prayer and sacrifice, to bear that name, to dwell in that Sanctuary, to carry that banner, to go forth conquering and to conquer — humble and hidden and lowly, sharing all the hatred that the world heaps on the Society of Jesus, and so strong in the charity of the Sacred Heart that the gates of Hell should not prevail against it, a little nothing, a mustard seed, but with a mission that should be a regeneration for thousands of souls. De Tournély did not see how it was to be, but he was strong in confidence, and at his early death, July 9th, 1797, his project did not die with him; a successor was prepared to receive the inheritance in the person of Father Varin.

A companion of Léonor de Tournély at St. Sulpice, Joseph Varin's health had given way under the strain of study, and he left the seminary to take up the profession of arms. He served with distinction in the army of Condé during the campaigns of 1792–3, but unable to brook what he considered the disgrace of having missed a sharp engagement through

temporary leave of absence, he threw up his commission and sought service with the Hussars of the Duc de Choiseul, then in Belgium. On his way thither, he passed through Vanloo, where it happened that Léonor de Tournély and his newly formed Society were then staying. One night passed in their company changed the course of Varin's life, for bent as he was in the evening on military glory, in the morning the grace of God completely won him to become henceforth a soldier of Christ and of Christ only. He did not know till afterwards that this eventful day, July 18th, 1794, was the eve of that on which his own heroic mother mounted the scaffold to die, and that her last prayer had been that her son might follow his vocation to the priesthood which she was convinced was his true call. That very day the little Society set out for Augsburg, and there, after two years' trial, Joseph Varin was ordained priest.

About the same time another Society having also for its object the re-establishment of the Society of Jesus was founded in Rome by Nicholas Paccanari, a cleric in minor Orders, known for his somewhat restless zeal. He and his companions took the name of "Fathers of the Faith of Jesus," and obtained for their work the sanction of Pope Pius VI., then in captivity.

When Paccanari heard of the existence of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, he proposed to Father Varin that, as their Societies had so much in common, they should be united under the same Superior. Father Varin, whose humility made him very diffident of his own power of governing, agreed, on condition that as soon as it was possible the Societies should be incorporated into the Society of Jesus. The Fathers of the Sacred Heart then became Fathers of the Faith under Paccanari as their Superior.

There was at that time living in retirement at Prague a sister of the Emperor Francis II., the Archduchess Mary Anne. She was a woman of remarkable piety, and it was well known that she wished to embrace religious life. The Princess of Bourbon-Condé, in whom Father de Tournély had at one time hoped he had discovered the foundation-stone for his Society

had recommended the Fathers of the Sacred Heart to her, and it seemed to both the Fathers Varin and Paccanari —for the latter had the same object in view —that she might be the person of whom they were in search. The scheme was proposed to her, and she with her ladies of honour, Leopoldine and Louise Naudet, took it up warmly. The congregation was begun and Leopoldine Naudet was named Superior, as the Archduchess would on no account accept the charge. Shortly afterwards they removed to Rome where a convent was founded. The Congregation took the name of *Dilette di Gesù*, and rapidly grew in numbers.

Although the *Dilette* at that time gave promise of success, a promise which time did not realize, a fresh beginning in France was a necessity if the wish of Father de Tournély's heart was to be carried out, and when Father Varin heard that Louis Barat had a sister, it immediately flashed across his mind that here might be the foundation-stone required. He went on immediately to ask how old she was, and what gifts she possessed. Father Barat answered that she was nineteen or twenty, that she had learnt Latin and Greek, could translate Homer and Virgil fluently and would make a good classical scholar, moreover that she had a religious vocation. All this made it seem to Father Varin more likely that she might be the person of whom he was in search.

Sophie was away at that time at Joigny for her holidays, but on her return Father Varin went to see her. "I found," he says, "a very delicate-looking, very retiring, very shy girl. What a foundation-stone! I said to myself, answering as it were the thought that passed through me when her brother first mentioned her name. And yet it was upon her that God willed to raise the edifice of the Society of His Sacred Heart. Here was the grain of mustard seed that was to grow into the tree whose branches are so wide-spread."

There was more than he could clearly account for to himself in Father Varin's conviction that Sophie Barat was chosen by God for this work. Her existence seemed to explain the past and open out the future. When he had seen her he

understood, as he himself in days to come used to delight in saying. Her education, her training in spiritual life, her lowly station, her youth, her religious vocation, her character, all were so many indications to him of God's will.

To the Abbé Barat this project came as a clue to much that had been till then obscure, and he thankfully entered into the scheme. Henceforth his mission with regard to his sister was at an end. Father Varin would guide and direct her, and he was free to begin his novitiate under the same Superior.

Sophie found Father Varin's direction a great contrast to that of her brother. All harshness was now at an end ; he was a true father to her, and whilst leading her to God by the path of Divine love he left her soul a freedom to which she had long been a stranger. His diffidence of his own power gave him all the more reliance upon God, and in his direction there was decision and firmness combined with that reverence for God's action, which gives true freedom to the soul.

When Father Varin had learnt to know Sophie well, and had prayed long and earnestly for light, he one day asked her what she wished to be. Sophie answered that she believed herself called to religious life, and that she wished to be a Carmelite.

"No," said Father Varin, "that is not your vocation. The gifts God has bestowed on you, and the education you have received point in another direction. They must not be buried in a cloister." He then told her about Father de Tournély and his projects, and added : "This is the kind of life to which you are called." Sophie listened, and then answered : "I will think it over, Father." "That is not the thing to do," Father Varin exclaimed. "When God's will is known, our part is to obey."

Light came to Sophie with these decided words. She knew God had spoken. His will was clear and without any further hesitation she prepared to follow the path that lay before her.

When Father Varin became Sophie's director he undertook the guidance also of two friends of hers, who during her stay in Paris had been associated with her in her studies and good

works, Octavie Bailly and Mdlle Loquet. They joined now also in the proposed scheme, and prepared to form the nucleus of the future Society. Octavie, who was ten years older than Sophie, and like her had thought of being a Carmelite, lived in Paris with a widowed mother and elder sister. During the Revolution, whilst working for their own support, they had risked their lives by hiding and helping priests, procuring for the dying the grace of the sacraments, and preparing children for their First Communion. Mdlle Loquet was looked up to by her friends as a person of much strength of mind, and her solid religious principles gained her the esteem of many priests. She had formed and superintended a work-room, and was the author of some little books in which the allegorical style then in vogue was adapted to pious subjects. Father Varin, who wished to lay his foundations in the utmost simplicity and lowliness, was heard to express a wish, that Mdlle Loquet were less known and less admired. Perhaps he had some doubt as to her vocation. A fourth in this little group was a servant-maid of Mdlle Duval's named Marguerite Maillard, who hoped to join the Society as a lay-sister. From the time the arrangement was definitely settled, Octavie came to live with Sophie under Mdlle Duval's roof, and Mdlle Loquet joined them every day for Father Varin's instructions.

In some notes relating to this period we find the following: "In that humble home, and under His protection whose labours it was to imitate, were laid the true foundations of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. There our Lord gave it its watchword, and impressed upon it the seal of His will, its own special form, a spirit at once firm, generous, and large-hearted, and yet loving and gentle."

From the very beginning, the question was discussed amongst Sophie and her companions what was to be the special and distinguishing mark of the little Society, its fundamental spirit. We know this from Father Varin himself, who, telling a later generation about these early days, said: "At the very beginning, when your first Mother and her companions were

only four, we used to meet every morning after Mass to talk over the future. One of the questions first raised was as to the spirit of the Society. The answer came as though spontaneously from all. 'It must be generosity,' they exclaimed with one voice. A strong generous love for Jesus Christ seemed to us the fitting characteristic of those who were to consecrate their lives to Him. Hence all self-seeking, narrow views, petty likes and dislikes, things to which even those in religion are liable if there is *rapine in the holocaust*, must be banished. Our Lord does not want those He chooses to bring Him a divided heart, nor does He want cowardly souls who fear to give Him all He asks." Thus courage, strength, patience, and above all unreserved generosity were the virtues which Sophie and her companions strove to make their own during those fervent days of recollection and solitude.

Sophie's heart was wide enough to take in the whole world. In after days she told her novices that at that time a missionary from Madagascar came and gave them an account of his labours. Later on, he wrote to ask if they had no thought of following the example of Maria d'Agreda by devoting themselves to the conversion of the heathen. "When I read that letter," Sophie said, "I understood by what I felt that no country was to be outside the pale of our Society; and this thought took possession of me as a call from God. As I wanted to answer the letter, I asked advice and was told: 'No, you are to stay in France. That is your field of labour, and you will seldom leave it.' As then I saw the foreign missions were denied me, I prayed that God would give me one day a companion who would go forth to distant lands instead of me, and work there better than I could do."

Towards evening, on November 13th, 1800, the feast of St. Stanislaus, the postulants met in the little chapel of the Fathers of the Faith for Benediction. When it was over, and the rest of those who formed the congregation had left, they remained alone to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Father Varin, who knew their thoughts, came back into the chapel and said: "So you cannot make up your minds to leave the good

Master whose blessing you have just received? Is there something more you want of Him?" Then beginning with the happiness of an entire consecration like that of St. Stanislaus, and warming with his subject, he spoke with such fervour that the desire to belong wholly to God sensibly increased in their hearts. In response, Father Varin promised that on the 21st of November, feast of the Presentation of our Blessed Lady in the Temple, they should make their act of consecration.

They began at once to prepare for the event by a retreat, and when the day came, the little chapel in the Rue de Touraine was adorned with whatever festive decorations it possessed. Father Varin said Mass, and after the Elevation the four postulants pronounced their consecration.

The service, simple as it was, made all the deeper impression upon Sophie as she had never yet seen any religious ceremony of the kind, nor, as far as she could remember, any nun. If she had, it must have been quite in her childhood before the Revolution. Speaking of it towards the close of a long lifetime of labour and care that grew out of that hour, she said in a tone that described, as no words could, the deep peace of her heart at that moment: "As for me I knew nothing, I foresaw nothing; I accepted all that was given me." Without any thought but that of following God's call, without any misgiving or anxiety about the future, she offered herself in all possible plenitude of oblation to fulfil His eternal designs. The future was unknown, but her will united itself beforehand to that of God in whatever He might send.*

We have in her own words another incident of the day. "When we left the chapel," she said once, "we placed a candle to burn before the altar in thanksgiving. Father Varin, my brother, and his companion, Father Roger, breakfasted with us, and our happy little gathering might have been taken for one of the *agapæ* of the early Christians. We were

* Sophie and her companions pronounced their consecration before the picture of the Madonna and Child previously mentioned. It belonged to Abbé Barat, but he sent this, with a few other things belonging to this chapel, to his sister at Amiens, where it remained for some years. She always prized it very highly in remembrance of her first consecration. It is now at the Mother House, in the chapel called St. Madeleine, the room in which she died.

longer than usual at table and had not finished when a lady called, and not to disturb us she went to wait in the chapel, but what was her alarm to find the altar-cloth on fire! It was easily put out, but in another minute the altar would have caught fire and perhaps the house also. Thus from the very beginning the devil showed his spite against us, and we felt the protection of our Lord."

The 21st of November, 1800, is then the birthday of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and each year the anniversary is kept with thanksgiving. Later on, speaking of these early days, Mother Barat said: "Our little Society is not like others which shine forth at once, brilliant with many virtues. We are very imperfect, we began on a very small scale, and poorly enough. But others will come after us and do better than we have done. Anyhow, the Society will not be perfect until it has its martyrs." "The Society began by a *dunghill*," she said at another time, adding, "you know whom I mean. That was useful, that we might have nothing to pride ourselves on, but now we want flowers with strength enough to produce fruits of life."

Although she acknowledged, and indeed it could not be denied, that she was the first stone of the Society, she would never allow that she was more than this. "I smile with pity," she said once, "when any one calls me the foundress. I turn quickly to our Lord, and say to Him: *It is Thou, alone, Lord, who hast done it all.*" The fact that she was one of the first called was only to her another motive for humiliation. "We were the rubble, the rough stones that are thrown into the foundations and lie hidden away for ever," she would say. "The fine polished stones come after and make the building beautiful." "Foundation-stones must be strong and durable," she said once, "for all the building rests on them." Then changing her tone, she added: "But this from me is like a forged signature which convicts the writer. When I think of what I was and what I am, I can only keep myself from utter discouragement by remembering that our Lord is the corner-stone, the only stone of this building. He is powerful enough

and merciful enough to make up for all in which we are wanting."

On November 20th, 1857, she said : "To-morrow it will be fifty-seven years since the birth of the Society. One person only was the first stone. The love and mercy of the Sacred Heart did every thing. We generally find that here below things degenerate in course of time, but it must not be so with this Society. I pray that those who now compose it may be better than those who went before them. You are our hope. How happy shall we be if when death comes, and all who laid the foundations have disappeared, we leave our work in the hands of those who are devoted to it and will carry out God's designs better than we did. We had no experience ; you must learn even by our mistakes and shortcomings."

CHAPTER IV

AT AMIENS. 1800–1802.

Many a blow and biting sculpture
Polished well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted
By the Heavenly Architect
Who therewith hath willed for ever
That His Palace should be decked.

BREVIARY.

THE early part of the year 1801 was spent by Sophie in Paris, but she went as usual during the summer to Joigny, and remained until the late autumn. Her brother joined her there for at least part of the time. It was for both of them a farewell visit to Joigny as their home, but no record remains of what passed.

The year 1801 was a time of renewal for religion in France. The preparations for the Concordat were going on, and Napoleon's strong hand was restoring order. Father Varin had lost no time in taking advantage of the altered state of things, and before the end of the year he had established in Amiens the first convent of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Amiens had suffered less from the spirit of the Revolution than most of the towns in France, and it may be said that religion had been maintained there without interruption even throughout the Reign of Terror. Many of the churches were held, it is true, by Constitutional priests, but private chapels replaced these to some extent. The faithful priests found in Amiens a security which they sought in vain elsewhere, for the mass of the people were averse to persecution, and the tribunals were noted for their leniency. As the dangers

decreased, religion was practised more or less openly. Whilst members of dispersed communities were gathering together again, new Congregations full of fresh life and fervour were being formed to meet the pressing wants of the day, and Amiens became a centre for this holy activity. The direction of a college in this town had, in the early summer, been offered to the Fathers of the Faith, and Father Varin went there in June to preach a course of sermons and arrange preliminaries. He made acquaintance with many good Catholics, who rejoiced to find in him one who promised to be so useful in helping to re-establish religion in their midst.

Under these circumstances, Father Varin soon found an opening for the convent, and, on September 22nd, he wrote from Paris to Father Barat, who was then at Joigny : " Your letter reached me a few days since, and Mdlle Duval received your sister's. . . . Mdlle Loquet set off last week (for Amiens), and Mdlle Octavie was quite ready to go too, but it was thought better she should wait, to travel with Sophie when she comes, which cannot be just yet. . . . Her elder sister is anxiously awaiting her."

On November 12th, Sophie, with Octavie and Marguerite, arrived at Amiens under Father Varin's escort. Their journey had been made very trying by heavy roads, disagreeable travelling companions, and bad coaches, but it was over at last, and they had a warm welcome from old, as well as new, friends. Their home was to be a house in a little street, called the Rue Martin-Bleu-Dieu. This singular name, as Sophie used to explain in after days, was due to the fact that the owner of one of the houses, named Martin, had, in a niche on his outside wall, a picture of God the Father, represented as an old man dressed in blue. There, Mdlle Loquet was waiting for them, and with her were two ladies, destined to be life-long friends and sisters to Sophie, Geneviève Deshayes and Henriette Grosier. They had been looking forward with great interest to her arrival, for they had heard much of her from Father Varin and Mdlle Loquet, and had been led to expect great things. " We loved her before we saw her,"

Geneviève wrote afterwards, "but when she came, her gentleness and charm, that peculiar charm which is her own and no one else's, drew us towards her irresistibly."

Mdlle Loquet had been in Amiens about two months. The first weeks had been spent in negotiations about the house, and, on October 17th, when these affairs were settled, it was made over to the Society. The house, which was already a school, had belonged to Henriette Grosier's aunt, Mdlle Devaux. Henriette wished to become a Carmelite, but her aunt, who had brought her up, was advancing in years and required her assistance in managing the school. When, however, through Father Varin's influence, it was arranged that the school (which though it had done good service was not prospering at that time) should become the property of the Society, it was for Henriette, as well as for her aunt, a happy solution of a difficulty. Nothing then prevented her from entering religion, and, as she found in the Society of the Sacred Heart all that her soul required, she thankfully joined it.

As soon as Mdlle Devaux's school had become the first convent of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Geneviève Deshayes went to live there also. She had no tie to keep her in the world, and a sermon of Father Varin's, in the spring of that year, on "Go and teach," strengthened the desire she had long felt to consecrate her life to God for the salvation of souls. While the Revolution lasted, she had spared nothing to shelter the persecuted priests, and, now that the storm was over, she was ready to spend and be spent in the work of re-establishing the Faith. She wished to become a nun, but although she had a high esteem for the Orders she knew, she felt nothing but repugnance to the idea of joining any one of them, and uncertainty about her future was a source of much trouble of mind.

When Father Varin spoke to her about the proposed Society, when he told her of its origin, its scope, its spirit, she said her heart felt too small for all it contained: "I was," she said, "like a person who comes into a house that has been furnished for her, where all her tastes have been studied and

foreseen, and every thing planned to suit them. I was fascinated by what I heard. I fell in love with the Society at first sight, and loved it as if I had known it for years. It was the the spirit of the Beloved Disciple himself which Father Varin described to me, . . . a spirit of burning zeal for the glory of our Divine Master, combined with tender and generous love. The Sacred Heart must be the shelter of its members, their food, their warmth, their light, their cooling stream, their element, their way, their life, their all. In It they are born, they grow, they live, they die. They go forth from It to win souls, and return to It with what they have won. They are God's messengers whether in action or in prayer, but all *by*, *in*, *with*, and *for* the Sacred Heart."

The arrival of Sophie, Octavie, and Marguerite, made it possible to establish something like regular observance in the little community, but Father Varin would not proceed further without making sure that the ground was firm beneath their feet. They were to make a fresh consecration on the anniversary of that made in the previous year, and were to prepare for it by a retreat. "Do you remember that retreat?" Sophie said, thirty years afterwards in a letter to Henriette Grosier; "*God alone* was our motto, and we wrote it wherever we could find a corner to put it in. He was leading us to find all in Him, as He leads those whom He intends to follow Him in the way of the Cross."

During this retreat, Father Varin asked each one separately whether she would promise to be faithful to the little Society. Mdlle Loquet, Geneviève, and Henriette all promised. Octavie, whose desire for a life of contemplation had never really left her, drew back and would not promise; and Father Varin, who saw no likelihood at that time of changing her determination, did not endeavour to do so. Before asking Sophie, he told her that Octavie would not renew her consecration with the rest the following day. "And you, my child," he inquired, "what will you do?" From Sophie's own avowal, we know that there was a short, but sharp struggle in her soul. It was a moment of keen suffering, but grace conquered. The thought of *God alone*

upheld her, and she answered without hesitation : " I must not change on account of my affection for any person or for any place. Whether the kind of life is pleasing to me or not pleasing, I believe it is God's will for me ; that is every thing I want. I will stay and do all I can." The next morning early all, except Octavie, went to the house of Madame de Rumigny whose guest Father Varin had been when he first came to Amiens. There they put on white dresses which they had brought with them, and went into her private chapel. Father Varin was there already, and preached on the text : " Blessed art thou who hast believed." Then he said Mass, and just before Holy Communion each one pronounced the formula of consecration. Sophie, as the youngest, should have come last, but by some mistake she was made to take precedence of the rest. She was too much absorbed in what she was about to notice it at the time, and those who did observe it were convinced that, unintentional as it was on their part, it had its meaning in the designs of God.

Soon after this, Octavie set out for Rome to give her vocation a further trial in the novitiate of the *Dilette di Gesù*. Father Varin also left Amiens for a time, and during his absence the other Fathers of the Faith, now established in their college there, watched over the spiritual interests of the little community, whose members were hence known at this time as *Dames de la Foi*, or *de l'Instruction Chrétienne*. It was impossible for them then openly to assume the name of Society of the Sacred Heart, because during the war in La Vendée badges of the Sacred Heart had been worn by the Royalists and had come therefore to be looked on as a sign of sedition.

" All this time, we were," as Geneviève expressed it, " like people feeling their course in the dark. It was God's way with us. He has always acted thus, just lifting the veil that we might see our path step by step, but not beyond. When Father Varin came, which was seldom, every thing fell into shape. We felt forcibly that he had the true spirit of God for our guidance."

The house in the Rue Martin-Bleu-Dieu was very small,

and its powers of accommodation were stretched to the utmost. On the ground-floor were two class-rooms, and the first floor was given up to the dormitories. The only shade in the little plot of ground where the children played was that afforded by a solitary hazel-tree. At the top of the house was a garret, the only available space for the chapel, the first chapel of the Society of the Sacred Heart! The favour of having the Blessed Sacrament reserved was compensation for all other privations. "It was there," wrote Geneviève, "that we began to serve Thee, O my God! In that cradle of our Society, Jesus was born for us, that we might gain the spirit of Bethlehem, the childlike simplicity that He loves. What happy hours we spent there!"

They had at first about twenty children, all more or less unruly, as the school discipline had been defective. Mdlle Loquet, the Superior, had great difficulties to contend against, and experience soon showed that, though she had many good qualities, she possessed none of that union of firmness, gentleness, and power of conciliation, necessary for governing others. It required a very different character from hers to knit together the elements she had to work with, and her incapacity was a great source of suffering to herself and those under her. God allowed it for a time for their sanctification.

Geneviève Deshayes has described the weeks that followed. After sketching in a few lines the previous difficulties, she said: "The arrival of our Sister Sophie was a joy and relief to Mdlle Loquet, who was overwhelmed by the charge of a school of children who did not particularly take to her. They liked Sister Henriette Grosier, but her hands were too full. Every thing fell upon her. Sister Sophie took the higher classes, and the religious instruction of the little ones. Till then Mdlle Loquet had alone given religious instruction to all, and she did it admirably, though perhaps her teaching was a little above the heads of the children. Five o'clock was the hour for rising and Mdlle Loquet awakened us by knocking with a stick upon the floor of the room above ours. However, through mistakes on our part or hers we were often dressed by three o'clock and making our meditation."

"As soon as we were up," Sophie said once, "each of us took her crucifix. Oh, that was the delightful moment!" Yet Sophie had the secret of prolonging that delightful moment throughout the day, and all its constant occupation, by her spirit of prayer.

One of Father Varin's first instructions had been on the words of Martha to her sister: *The Master is here and calleth for thee.* The little community had adopted this as their watchword for meeting every call of obedience. "We steered our course by the pole-star of obedience, mortification, death to private judgment," wrote Geneviève; and indeed opportunities for practising all these virtues were not wanting.

To begin with they were very poor. Sophie's whole fortune when she came to Amiens was one crown-piece. Geneviève had more but she had ruined herself by her charities, and to defray the first expenses she had sold her furniture, lace, and dresses. "I did it most gladly," she said, "and would willingly have sold myself into the bargain, or cut myself in pieces for the dear Society, to which I could only bring my love. Our fare was most frugal," she adds, "and as we had only what the children left, dry bread was often our portion; but we listened meanwhile with interest to the reading in the refectory from Mdlle Loquet's little books: *The Journey of Sophie and Eulalie to the Palace of True Happiness*, etc., etc.

"Our walks with the children were generally outside the town, but one day they begged for and obtained leave to go to the *Hotoie*, the fashionable promenade of Amiens. Sophie and I were with them, and on the way back, just in the middle of the great avenue, several broke away from us like runaway ponies, and Sister Sophie ran after them in great distress and anxiety. From mischief, they ran all the faster when they found she was giving them chase. I, meanwhile, was keeping the rest and hurrying them on to get home. . . .

"In the course of the first few weeks, Mdlle Loquet devised for us round caps such as her work-women wore, in fact the usual headgear of that class, and the rest of our costume was in keeping with this. We went every day to Mass in the

parish church, and took the children there to High Mass on Sundays, as well as to Vespers. Once we went to the *Hotoie* on a Sunday, and those who were known in the place heard their names being passed from mouth to mouth with ill-concealed ridicule of their appearance. Nothing came amiss to us, however, and I even swept the path before our house-door every morning without minding it at all. I did my best to harden myself against all external impressions, that I might feel nothing and fancy myself in another world a thousand miles away from friends and home." Geneviève was very well known in Amiens, and love of the world and of dress had striven long in her heart for at least a portion of her allegiance. "In the evening," she continues, "when the day's labour was over, the children in bed, and Mdlle Loquet in her room, Sophie, Henriette, and I were free. It was like a refreshing bath! The pleasure of being together was more delightful than I can express, and *God alone* was the bond and joy of our meeting."

This was the time for needlework, which they took in, if they could get it, to help towards their support, and they often worked on till late at night. They sat by the expiring embers of the fire on the kitchen hearth, and their heads nearly met as they bent towards the solitary light. "Sophie," continues Geneviève, "burning with zeal, talked of her desire for the missions of Canada. Henriette echoed her wish. I listened and admired, but felt too small for such enterprises, and confessed that my zeal was confined at present to my own country."

The following letter from Father Varin to Sophie shows us many of the secrets of her soul at this time.

Paris, Dec. 28th, 1801.

Your letter touched me very much. On the one hand, I see our good Master, drawing and binding you closer to Himself, wishing that you should find in Him your whole peace and joy. On the other hand, the enemy of all good is trying to disturb your happiness. How much I pray our Lord to give you a clear light as to the different action of the good spirit and the bad. With this knowledge you would yield to

the influence of the first, and have supreme contempt for the second. In the name of our Lord Himself, I will give you this rule (which is none of my own invention): When you feel your soul expand, your heart dilate, your mind grow clearer, when you feel happy, trustful, full of hope, say to yourself: This is my Beloved, the Beloved of my soul. It is thus He makes known His presence. And then your Heavenly Father says to you: *Hic est Filius meus dilectus, ipsum audite.* He says also: *Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam.*

When, on the other hand, your soul is straitened, as it were, your mind clouded, oppressed by doubts, anxieties, and perplexities, and your heart heavy; when discouragement, sadness, and mistrust assail you, who can cause this but your own enemy and that of your Beloved? Despise him therefore; have supreme contempt for him; beware of listening even for a moment to what he says. Do not put such an affront on our Lord, as for one moment to mistake His miserable and hateful enemy for Himself.

Do not forget either, that, whatever faults you may fall into, He will never cause you sadness or dark days. His Hand will never fail to be held out to you as a token that your faults, far from driving Him away, do but increase His tenderness and care. Mingled with your sorrow for having offended Him, there will be so much sweetness and joy, that like St. Teresa you will never love Him so much and feel so deeply the happiness of belonging to Him as after some fault.

Yes, my Lord, this is Thy way with Thine own. Any other influence is not from Thee. You must learn, Sister Sophie, to know the mind and Heart of Jesus, and give yourself up entirely to His guidance. Have no fear of His enemy and yours. *Despise him, despise him!*

To make it easier to you to practise these rules, I advise you to be very open with her who is as a mother to you, and with your director. . . . Be bright and happy. I do not know what *your* good brother and *ours* could have said to bring trouble and anxiety upon your soul. I draw my pen through every line of his letter, and even the smallest word, that was not an expression of encouragement, joy, and congratulation.

Sophie followed this advice on every point, and soon benefited by it. Her union with God became deeper and more constant, and she found in it a source of strength and of energy that raised her above her own weakness. Her sound judgment

and keen discrimination could not but point out to her what was amiss in the actual arrangement of things, but she set her companions the example of never making the slightest reflection upon it. More than this, she closed her eyes and shut her ears to every thing that did not come within the scope of her own duties. Geneviève, who had not yet attained to this perfection, thought it right to complain to her Superior of some salient breach of discipline on the part of one of the children. As there was divergence of opinion on the question, Sophie was appealed to. Her answer was that "she had seen nothing."

Even ordinary observers had only to look at Sophie or to hear her speak, to be struck by the unconscious dignity that came from her habitual union with God. Geneviève tells us that those who had never seen her before often stopped to ask who she was, and that she herself frequently had this question put to her.

Father Varin came back to Amiens in the summer of 1802, and soon decided that Sophie and Geneviève should make their vows. The latter was urgent in her entreaties for this great grace. Sophie was too deeply impressed with the sense of her own unworthiness to make any request, but Father Varin saw that for both the time had come. Monday in Whitsun-week, June 7th, was chosen for the ceremony which was to take place like that of the preceding year in Madame de Rumigny's chapel.

When the morning came, Sophie was missed from the group of those about to set out. She was anxiously sought for, and was found at length under the hazel-tree in the garden, entirely lost in God and her face radiant with happiness. She was quite motionless and knew nothing of what was going on around her. They were obliged to wait until she became once more conscious of the sights and sounds of earth, and then as a bride she went forth to meet that Heavenly Bridegroom to whom she and Geneviève were that morning united for time and eternity.

Early in 1802, the work of a poor school was added to that which the little Society had already undertaken, and soon one

hundred and sixty children came to the large class-room which had been hired near their house. The eldest amongst these children became teachers and monitresses, and the four mistresses did for them as much as their other duties allowed. They were joined about the same time by three new associates, two of whom, Madame Baudemont and Madame Capy, were former nuns driven from their convents by the Revolution ; the third was Adèle Jugon, who was of great use to them in this time of stress, but proved to have no vocation, though she was always a staunch friend to the Society.

Meanwhile, thanks to the devotedness of the mistresses and the perfect understanding amongst them, the school in the Rue Martin-Bleu-Dieu was increasing in numbers, and it was impossible any longer to find room for all. A move was therefore imperative, and they left their old quarters for a larger house in the Rue Neuve.

The change was made at six o'clock in the evening on the feast of Corpus Christi, and it was accomplished in the most primitive fashion. Each one carried a heavy bundle of their goods and chattels, and thus, on foot, the whole establishment proceeded across the town at a time when the streets were crowded and every one was astir. As their new house had no garden, they rented a small farm called *La Folie Binet*, outside the gates of Amiens. It often fell to the lot of Sophie and Mdlle Jugon to take the children out there. Adèle was tall and strong, and she would reassure her companion, whose voice was too weak to be heard by the children, when the fancy took any of them to play the truant. "Never mind," Adèle would say, "I will run, and especially I will shout for you."

Mdlle Loquet's arbitrary mode of governing was not at all what Father Varin intended. She was zealous and talented, but she had not the spirit which the Society required. She was exacting and hard with her Sisters, and with the children her action was uneven. Sometimes she was very severe and scolded them unmercifully ; at others, she yielded to their whims and caprices, and was indulgent even to weakness. Father Varin's frequent and long absences, together with the

submission and blind obedience of Sophie and her companions, kept him in ignorance of the true state of the case. Adèle Jugon was the first to enlighten him, for it did not occur to her to keep silence about the faults of Mdlle Loquet's government, the hardness of her yoke, and the heroic abnegation with which it was borne. Madame Baudemont's observations completely tallied with her own, and Father Varin became convinced of the necessity for a change.

At the end of June, 1802, Madame Louise Naudet was sent from the convent of the *Dilette* in Rome, with authority to visit the house at Amiens. The truth of the case was soon clear to her, and Father Varin would at once have put an end to the existing arrangement if he had not just then been obliged to leave Amiens for Rome.

On his return, in November, his conviction that Mdlle Loquet was not called to the Society, was confirmed, and he told her of this decision. On the 3rd of December, the feast of her patron saint, St. Francis Xavier, she left Amiens for Paris, where she re-opened her industrial school, and led a life devoted to good works. "Whatever her faults may have been, and even on account of them," wrote Geneviève, "she did much for us by keeping us in a spirit of childlike simplicity, which made us live under the touch of God's Hand without knowing whither He was leading us." It did not say much for Mdlle Loquet's discrimination, that her chief anxiety on leaving Amiens was that she thought no one could replace her. "Who is there?" she said. "Sister Grosier cannot even put her own room in order; Sister Geneviève only trots here and trots there, and Sister Sophie has not two words to say for herself." Madame Naudet looked on things very differently, and soon made up her mind that Sister Sophie was well-fitted to take charge of the community and school. It was clear to her how much practical ability was hidden under the humble simplicity of that gentle manner, and that Sophie possessed the love and confidence of all was easily ascertained.

As to Sophie herself, her only desire was to take the last and lowest place, and live hidden away with her Beloved in that

inmost sanctuary of her heart where her true life was passed. Her health was very delicate at that time, and Madame Naudet pursued her unceasingly with the most minute and anxious precautions. She thought that her weakness was caused by her continual prayer, and tried therefore to curtail it as much as possible, a cruel kindness which deprived Sophie of her only consolation.

At last it became necessary to prepare Sophie for the blow which was about to fall upon her. Madame Naudet called together the community, and aroused their zeal by her own burning words on the entire devotedness which an apostolic vocation requires. Then, turning to Sister Sophie, she reproached her with what she called her too great *concentration*, and added that she must *come out of herself*. Sophie, astonished and contrite, listened in silence and on her knees, and when Madame Naudet had ceased speaking she only said: "And may I never go in again, Mother?" It was impossible not to laugh, and the meeting broke up, but Sophie was only the more loved by her Sisters.

The next day was the 21st of December, the feast of St. Thomas. After Mass, Father Varin and Father Roger came to the convent, and again the community were assembled. Father Varin tells us what occurred. "I spoke to them," he says, "for a few minutes about our Lord, and then told them that I wished to make sure that they were sufficiently instructed to teach Christian Doctrine to their pupils. So I put them some questions in catechism: to one about the sacraments, to another about grace, and so on. When it was Sister Sophie's turn, I said: 'You are the youngest, and I must give you the easiest question. Why did God make you?' 'To know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him,' she answered. 'What do you mean by *serving God?*' I continued. 'Doing His will,' she replied. She would have said more, but this was enough for me. I interrupted her: 'To serve God is to do His will, you say. You wish, no doubt, to serve Him?' 'Yes, Father.' 'Well, His will is that you should be Superior.' These words came as a thunderbolt to her.

She fell on her knees, burst into tears, and besought pity, but we were inflexible. Imagine what it was to her! It nearly killed her, especially when later on she was elected Superior General. For ten years she never ceased to cry for mercy, but for the happiness of all who lived under her this was lost labour on her part."

Towards the end of his life, speaking of this election, Father Varin said: "All know what this seed brought forth. . . . I never had any obstacle to overcome in Mother Barat but *her humility*. It was a ten years' struggle between us, on her side to escape from the government of the Society, on mine to make her understand that she held it from the will of God."

Madame Louise Naudet was soon recalled to Rome, but before she left, the Amiens community adopted the same dress as that of the *Dilette*. At her departure, the whole work of the Superior fell on Sophie, for whom this election was indeed a crushing blow. She referred to it in such terms, the first time she spoke to the assembled community, that every heart was moved, and from compassion came fresh love that made devoted obedience easy and sweet. Never during upwards of sixty-two years that she bore the burden of responsibility and command, did she depart from the ideal which St. Augustine puts before us, when, speaking of one in authority, he says: "But whilst loved, feared, and reverenced as the superior and servant of all, in his silent spirit he must be at the feet of all." And as an outward token of this spirit, which filled her heart, she knelt that day before each one and kissed her feet.

CHAPTER V

THE ORATOIRE. 1803–1804.

En vérité, a-t-on à se plaindre des femmes en France, depuis soixante ans? Sont-ce les femmes qui ont fait les révolutions, qui ont créé des embarras aux gouvernements? N'est-il pas vrai qu'en sauvant la religion, à laquelle elles se sont montrées seules fidèles pendant plus de trente ans, elles ont sauvé le pays, . . . or, où ont été élevées ces femmes? Dans les couvents presque toutes.—*Words of Cardinal Pie to Napoleon III. in 1855. See* VIE, i., 565.

THE first year after Mother Barat's nomination as Superior was full of trials of one kind or another. Unfortunately none of her letters written at this time have been preserved, but we can follow her indirectly, if not directly, through Father Varin's correspondence. On January 21st, 1803, he wrote to her from Paris: "Whatever happens, we can all say: *In manu Domini sumus.* If you do not forget this there will be nothing to prevent my saying to you: *Confortare et esto robustus* (Josue i. 6). You will perhaps say it ought to be *robusta*, but I put it so on purpose, for you are not to be in the feminine any longer, and, to quote Scripture again, I add: *Esto vir.*"

Again, on the 31st, he wrote a few lines in which we can see the key-note of his direction. He alludes to the critical position in which the Fathers of the Faith were at that time, and adds: "This is the burden of our song: Courage, confidence, and complete surrender of all into God's hands. Nothing gives Him so much glory as hoping in Him against all hope. So then,— *Spes contra Spem.*"

It was not long before the beneficial effects of Mother Barat's rare talent for administration were felt, and her example of

unselfish devotedness reacted upon all those under her. In spite of ill-health and ceaseless work, she continued to teach her class until Father Varin put a stop to it. He wrote from Lyons, June 20th, 1803: "This is my urgent request: that as soon as possible, if it can be, the very day this reaches you, you should be relieved of any teaching in the school. One of the new postulants can replace you. I attach great importance to this, and hope very soon to hear that it is arranged."

A week later, he wrote from Besançon: "I am not surprised to hear of your trials. Neither should I be surprised to hear that God had made it impossible for you to continue to discharge your duties; but it would be unpardonable if you should conclude from this that you were not called to do what you have hitherto done, and I am sure you did not dwell on the idea." Another time he said: "Go on, go forward; you are in the right path. Remember it is not your own doing that you are where you are. God has put you there. Go on with confidence, and let nothing terrify you. Once again, courage and confidence! Labour and trouble in this world; the whole of eternity for rest!"

About the middle of July, he wrote: "I heartily approve of the operations you have performed, like a skilful physician who does not shrink from amputation when there is no other cure. Moreover, the strength and holy liberty of spirit with which you act, and which are God's gifts, are a great satisfaction to me. Go on making use of them, and do not be afraid of people saying you are going too far."

Father Varin was occupied at this time in giving missions, a labour which he shared with the other Fathers of the Faith. In the course of his preaching, he met with several persons who wished to enter religion, and if they seemed apt for the works of the Society of the Sacred Heart, he put them into communication with Mother Barat, whose judgment, with regard to character and disposition, he relied on more and more, as experience tested her discrimination. He once had sent to her a person whom, in his charity, he wished her to receive, although he knew that the candidate for admission was below the average

as to intelligence. Mother Barat had objected on this score, but Father Varin thought she was too particular, and urged his request, saying, at the same time, that human motives actuated her refusal. She was never at a loss for an answer. "Since you wish it, Father," she replied, "we will accept her, for it so happens that we are nine now, and we must have a zero to make ten." "I had a good admonition for this," she added when she told the story, "and the postulant into the bargain, for my penance; but she could not stay, and went away of her own accord. Even Father Varin owned afterwards that, with work like ours, we could not get on with mere nonentities."

The Fathers of the Faith gave great assistance in helping to raise the standard of efficiency in the mistresses. They undertook the religious instruction of the children, and, under their direction, the studies were organized and regulations laid down. As the school became more known, its numbers rose, but the house was ill-adapted for its purpose and too small, so that much additional difficulty and anxiety were involved in watching over the children, and many had to be refused for want of space.

Since Mother Barat had been Superior, she had been prevailed upon to make use of a small room to herself. "I consoled myself for this distinction," she said," by the thought that being alone would enable me to spend with our Lord, at night, some of the time which, but for my incessant occupation, I would so gladly have spent with Him during the day. But Mother Deshayes, who watched over our health, pursued me into my retreat, and made me go to bed. One day, I spied a little hook on the door, and fastened myself in with it at night. Soon I heard Mother Deshayes' hand upon the handle, but she could not open the door, neither would I. She went off sadly, and I was delighted. Flushed with success, I did the same on the next night, and was making up for lost time, when I heard a slight noise, and at once Mother Deshayes was upon me. It was her turn to triumph! She had lifted the hook from outside, with a splinter of wood. I was conquered, and had to

obey. This was the only point on which we were not of one mind."

There was, indeed, only too much reason for this vigilance, for, since her nomination, Mother Barat had neither eaten nor slept, and her strength was decreasing daily. Yet she had to bear up against sudden and unexpected trials. Madame Capy, who had won the confidence and esteem of all to such an extent that Father Varin had settled that, in case Mother Barat became too ill to continue her work, she should replace her as Superior, was attacked, in September, by brain-fever, and when, after weeks of anxious nursing, the illness had abated, she went out of her mind, and ran raving about the streets, until she was confined in a lunatic asylum. After hearing of all this, Father Varin wrote to Mother Barat, on October 20th:

I repeat now, with more confidence than ever, that God has set His seal upon your house. It is marked by a long series of trials and crosses; it will soon be so by blessings, which will bring prosperity to your undertakings. With all my strength, I repeat: confidence; confidence and lively faith. Soon you will learn by experience to know our Lord.

He told her of several postulants, and added:

They will help you very much, but you will not be relieved of the burden that weighs you down. Courage, then, and think only of bearing it generously. Remember our Lord is with you; has He not strength enough?

On November the 4th, he wrote:

Well, have you made your sacrifice? Are you still saying: "What a burden I have to bear? At least," you say, "it would be all very well if I carried it as I ought, and without giving way under it." But have you forgotten that our Lord fell beneath His Cross, without ever saying it was too heavy? He fell with His Cross, and rose again with it; now He is in glory: *Et regni ejus non erit finis.* He is your King, your Beloved, your Model, but you are treated better than He was. When He fell He received only blows and insults, and Simon, who helped Him to carry His Cross, did so perhaps unwillingly: when you falter, the saints and angels, the Queen of Heaven, Jesus Himself, your God, hasten to your aid. . . . Complain now if you can.

A few days later:

I have no greater wish than to help you to bear your burden. I repeat again, with the utmost assurance, so many trials come from God upon you and your convent, that you must not grieve. With this very shower of crosses, comes the certainty that God is looking with favour upon you and yours. How carefully we should hoard the treasures that these trials, passing as they are, bring with them.

The cause of Mother Barat's suffering and weakness during the last few months proved, early in 1804, to be a cancer; her lungs also seemed to be threatened. In face of a trial of this nature her courage did not fail, and pain always found her calm, and even joyful. As she believed herself only an obstacle to the good which the little Society might accomplish, death had no terrors for her, and she looked forward to it with gratitude and joy. "What are we," she said to Mother Deshayes who urged on her, for their sakes, the necessity of care, "that we should think God has any need of us? Cannot He raise up children to Abraham from the very stones beneath our feet? I assure you this thought amply consoles me for death." "I do suffer," she said again, "but to know that it is God's will makes me think nothing of it. Patience; very soon all suffering will be over. Is it worth while, then, to make such a fuss about it?"

Mother Deshayes knew that without Father Varin's authority, Mother Barat would take no means for her cure, so as soon as she found out the truth she lost no time in letting him know. He wrote from Tours enjoining perfect obedience to the infirmarian, even if it were to end in her going to stay for awhile in Paris, with the Sisters of Charity, for treatment. Mother Barat answered the letter, but avoided the subject in question, and enlarged on various points in which she knew Father Varin to be keenly interested. He did not however fall into the trap, but wrote again:

March 6th, 1804.

I have just read your letter of March 2nd. You are as clever as the Samaritan woman who so skilfully turned off the conversation

which our Lord had begun about her doings. I hope that for the future you will be sensible, and not make it necessary to urge you further to do what reason and religion require of you, for the care of your health. You know what a wise and enlightened man M. Lambert is.* When I told him of your opposition he said ; "And this is one of the *Dames de la Foi!* Is this their spirit? Oh! what a poor idea it gives me of their house!" M. Thomas, whose opinion is equally valuable, said the same ; I say nothing of Father Gloriot, who could not get over his astonishment. It is certain that theology and reason are against you. It is equally certain that your resistance pains me exceedingly. . . . However, I shall forgive and forget all, if you do every thing that Mother Deshayes (after consulting M. Bruson) prescribes for you by the doctor's orders. Now let your past misdemeanours and my reproaches be buried in oblivion. . . . Believe that I am entirely yours in Jesus Christ, and that I shall never be more so than when I scold you most. But you would not, would you, on this account act so as to be scolded? *Absit*,—far be it from you, says St. Paul.

Such arguments were unanswerable, and Mother Barat made up her mind to go to Paris with Mother Deshayes. Before leaving Amiens, however, she spent a few days in solitude and prayer. Father Varin did not delay in expressing his approval. "M. Leblanc tells me," he wrote, "that you are going to set out for Paris. God be praised! If this is one of the fruits of your retreat, your time has not been wasted. This is the courage I asked for you, courage to bear not trials of your own choosing, but those of God's choice."

Three days later, he wrote again : "If you are in Paris it is a proof that you are not a saint who works miracles, but none the less do I believe in miraculous power. None the less also shall I believe in your sanctity, if you are obedient as a child to those who have charge of you ; if your obedience is as easy as that of a child, and not forced, like that of a victim who is led to death."

The months of April and May were spent by Mother Barat with the Sisters of Charity, and although there was some improvement in her health, further time was necessary to

* Monsieur Lambert and the others mentioned in this letter were Fathers of the Faith.

regain strength. Mother Deshayes, who had accompanied her to Paris, then returned to Amiens, and Mother Barat went with Sister Marguerite (who had been Mdlle Duval's maid) to stay with a Madame Bergeron. The weeks she spent with her were not without their trials, as her letters to Mother Deshayes show.

Is this the way for a religious to go about? [she says] with well-filled purse, and money enough for anything she may fancy? a carriage when she goes out? dainty food when she must eat? This is how Marguerite treats me. So I do my best not to go out, and more than that, I would never eat if I could help it. I hope you are not accusing me of stinginess, but for that matter it is your own fault if you misjudge your neighbour. I have changed my quarters, but I see I cannot hope to change my regimen. Will not a time come, at least a little while before my death, when I shall be free to shorten my Purgatory? But as to that, is it I alone that shall suffer? Are you not afraid of what will fall to your share? However, our intention is good; may God forgive us all!

I am tired out of it [she wrote again], that is, when I am not alone. It has come to this, that really sometimes I do not know what I am saying, or what I am doing. This is a good reason for leaving Madame de Bergeron's drawing-room. One turn in my own room takes off this giddiness, and I can breathe again. You were right in saying you left me alone; yet no, I am not alone, happily I have our Lord. Nothing but this could make me put a good face on it before all the people here, for nothing will satisfy this good lady, but that I should see every member of her family, and it seems to me to be as numerous as that of Jacob. I shall never come to the end of them.

Mother Deshayes did not look at things from the same point of view, and wished, in spite of this letter, that Mother Barat should see, or rather be seen by, more people. The latter wrote:

I could scarcely help laughing when you told me you were sorry that I did not go to Madame de Carvoisin's, amongst all those fine people. Unless I am mistaken, you are infected with the malady of the owl in the fable that gave the eagle such a grand description of her owlets. You know how that turned out, and how dear the poor owl paid for her vanity. What should I have done at Madame de

Carvoisin's? The only thing they could have said was: "Is *that* all?" Of course it is a curiosity to see a Superior of the *Dames de la Foi* such as I am. Good people may be led thereby to give glory to God, but others can only laugh. Please do not be sorry any more. I do not see that it could have done much good that I should show myself. For the sake of his Society, St. Ignatius forbids the Fathers to make themselves ridiculous.

During the time of her stay in Paris, a project was on foot for establishing the Society in an old monastic building there, the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*. Madame Bergeron, Mother Barat's hostess, had set her heart upon it, and had even bought the property, when the plan was changed. Mother Barat wrote thus of the disappointment, to Mother Deshayes:

More and more visits! What a place Paris is! I am afraid of it, but a kind Providence is arranging everything. I think our poor *Abbaye-aux-Bois* will slip through our fingers. A few hours will decide. . . . God knows better than we do what is good for us. My mind is at rest, though I should have liked this house to be founded. Madame Bergeron is not so *indifferent*. She is very active and enterprising, and takes a great deal on herself. She will have more merit than we poor stones. We shall lose credit in this great city, and God knows all that will be said. But what do stones care about this?

In another letter she added:

You will have good reason to be astonished at God's providence over us; we have another proof of it, though one that is not what is most pleasant. The affair of the *Abbaye-aux-Bois* is entirely at an end.

There was nothing after this to keep her in Paris, and in May she returned to Amiens, where grave events made her presence necessary.

At the time of Father Varin's visit to Rome, in 1802, serious doubts perplexed him as to Paccanari's sincerity, and even as to his conduct. The following year, these suspicions became certainties, and it was clearly proved that Paccanari's object was not to join the Society of Jesus, which he could easily have done, as it was re-established at Naples, but to continue as the head of his own Society of Fathers of the Faith,

contrary to the agreement which had led the Fathers of the Sacred Heart to join him. Father Varin and his associates separated altogether, therefore, from Paccanari's Society, in June, 1804. They were still called Fathers of the Faith, and Father Varin was their Superior General whilst awaiting the time when it should be possible for them to join the Society of Jesus. The convent at Amiens was henceforth quite separate from that of the *Dilette*, which indeed soon afterwards broke up. Octavie Bailly returned to Amiens in the course of the summer, but she did not stay long. She entered a convent of Carmelites in Paris, and lived a holy life there until her death in 1825.

Her loss was for Mother Barat another sorrow added to the many trials of this year. The horizon was gloomy indeed, and the position of the little Society perilous. In this dark hour Mother Barat turned to our Lady, and solemnly consecrated it to her. "In our extremity," she said once, "I saw no other safety than in the protection of our Lady. As we were near the feast of the Assumption, I got our Sisters to make a novena, during which we spent in prayer all the time we were not with the children. On the day of the feast we consecrated the Society to our Blessed Lady promising that the novena and consecration should be renewed each year at the same time, as long as the Society should exist." Her confidence was quickly rewarded. The dark clouds dispersed, and many chosen souls were called by God to join and strengthen her little community. Amongst them were two especially, whom we shall always find by her side. Their fidelity and loyalty never failed her, and their gifts of nature and of grace made them pillars of strength, to uphold her work. They were Emilie de Charbonnel and Félicité Desmarquest.

The insufficient accommodation of the Rue Neuve was more and more felt, and an opportunity for moving into better quarters was gladly taken. The Fathers of the Faith had been established in a building known as the Oratoire, because it was erected by the Congregation of the French Oratory, founded by Cardinal de Berulle. They were transferring their

college elsewhere, and the Society of the Sacred Heart rented the house they were leaving. The change was made on Michaelmas Day, 1804, and the Society thus took possession of its permanent abode in Amiens.* For ninety-six years, it has occupied the same spot, justly called the "Cradle of the Society," and although it became necessary, in time, to rebuild the old convent, some parts have been carefully preserved as relics of the past. Under these improved conditions, the school soon became very prosperous, and Mother Barat's energy and judgment were the life and soul of every thing. Far from "seeing nothing," as before, now, when vigilance was a duty, nothing escaped her watchful eye, and no difficulty arose that she could not meet and overcome.

* The members of the Society of the Sacred Heart who with Madame Barat took possession of the Oratoire at Michaelmas, 1804, were Geneviève Deshayes, Henriette Grosier, Rosalie Marguerite Debrosse, Marie du Terrail, Catherine Emilie de Charbonnel, Adèle Bardot, Félicité Desmarquest, Henriette Ducis, Thérèse Duchatel. To these must be added Madame Baudemont and Madame Copina.

CHAPTER VI

PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE. 1804–1805.

Oh well for him whose will is strong!
TENNYSON.

MEANTIME, far away from Amiens, God was fashioning by trial and sorrow, as the souls of saints are fashioned, one who, through long years and in close union with Mother Barat, was to give Him the service of an heroic life.

In August, 1804, Father Varin, who had been preaching missions in Lyons and the neighbourhood, wrote: "I have made a great acquisition in the course of my journey, and we shall want you here. What a pity you cannot be in four places at once!" He had, in fact, made arrangements for founding another convent, and, a few days later, he wrote: "Thank God, I have only good news to give you. How foolish is he who, whilst the storm rages, does not believe fine weather will return! more foolish still, if, in the midst of trials, he does not trust himself to Him from whom they come! There is no question yet of dividing you into four parts, but only into two. . . . Guess why. . . . 'What are we to do?' you will exclaim. One poor little household is such a handful, and if the *whole* is worth so little, what will the *half* be! *Modicæ fidei, quare dubitasti?* — Oh, thou of little faith! Trust our Lord. He will make each half worth the whole; only trust Him."

On one of the spurs of the Alps, close to Grenoble, there was a Visitation convent, founded by St. Jane Frances de Chantal. It was called Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, and, until the Revolution, successive generations of fervent religious had maintained within its walls the spirit of its saintly foundress.

But desolation had come upon the holy place, and, in 1791, the nuns were dispersed by order of the Government. During the Reign of Terror, the building was used as a prison, but afterwards was left empty, to fall into ruin. Amongst the community, at the time of the dispersion, was Philippine Duchesne*, still a novice, in spite of several years in religion, because, in such threatening times, her father had absolutely refused his consent to her being bound by any solemn ties. She loved religious life with an intensity of will that belonged to a character where every thing was great, and, next to this, she loved Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, where she had been educated, and where she hoped to live and die.

As soon as order was restored in France, she succeeded, through the influence of her family and friends, in obtaining possession of the convent. In December, 1801, she took up her abode there almost alone, and from that time the bell, silent for ten long years, rang once more at the appointed times for prayer. Philippine tried to gather again, under the old roof, those of the community who survived. Few responded to her appeal, and those who came found life impracticable in the half ruinous building, and left it again, to her intense sorrow and disappointment. But this failure convinced her that God had other designs for Sainte-Marie. One or two ladies joined her, and were still there, under the title of Daughters of the Propagation of the Faith, occupied in teaching a small school, when, in 1804, Father Varin came to preach at Lyons. One of Philippine's companions, Mdlle Rivet, who was at the head of the little community, was sister of the Vicar General of Grenoble, and through him Fathers Varin and Roger were brought to Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, on the feast of St. Ignatius, July 31st, 1803. Philippine had already heard of Mother Barat and her convent at Amiens from Mdlle Rivet, and was longing for a chance of joining the Society of the Sacred Heart, which united what she loved best in the Visitation with scope for satisfying the apostolic desires of her ardent nature. But Father Varin was not in a hurry.

* See *Life of Mother Duchesne*, by Mgr Baunard, translated by Lady Georgiana Fullerton.

"After Mass," Mother Duchesne writes, "the Fathers went over the building. I followed Father Varin closely, to hear his remarks and to see whether he showed any sign of pleasure or displeasure. But he showed nothing, and I, who have not such self-command, began to feel very impatient. When he came to the chapel of the Sacred Heart, he said: 'Ah! this is what would make one wish to be a nun of the Visitation.' That was not what I wanted. Father Roger, when I sounded him about the object of the visit, said they had come to see Madame Rivet." For men so dead to themselves, this seemed to me a great concession to the claims of friendship. They were to leave the next day, and, after their Mass, we went to see them. Father Varin spoke to me about *holy indifference*, and the slowness with which the works of God are accomplished. I replied that Holy Scripture, on the contrary, says of Him, that 'He rejoiced, as a giant, to run His course,' and, carrying on the same thought, I added that if St. Francis Xavier had acted so deliberately, he would not have done so much or gone so far in so few years. Father Varin laughed, and confessed that I was right, and added that Madame Barat should come and see what could be made of the house. The previous evening, at Benediction, the Holy Ghost had put into his heart a decision completely in our favour, but he said nothing of it at the time."

Father Varin's promise, as Mother Duchesne expressed it, "lifted a mountain of care from her heart." He wrote several times to encourage her, and, indeed, took up her cause so warmly that, in one letter, he said that "he would as soon forget his right hand as the agreement they had come to." Madame Rivet expressed the gratitude of all in a letter, to which, in course of time, Mother Barat sent the following answer:

Amiens, November 2nd, 1804.

MADAME,—I received your letter of September the 19th, expressing your feelings in the name of all your companions. I rejoiced to see how well prepared you are, and fit therefore, to carry out God's designs. All this makes me deeply regret that He should have cast

His eyes on me to foster the growth of virtues in your souls. So many others might have helped you more successfully that I can, or could venture to hope to do, if I did not put all my trust in God. But flowers planted in rich and fertile soil require less skill and care on the part of the gardener, and this is no doubt the reason why God has chosen me, so poor and weak, and without human means at my disposal. This is what fills me with consolation, and assures me beforehand that God's blessing will be on what I do, and that you by your prayers will obtain for me the graces necessary to help you in carrying out God's designs. . . . I am longing to go to you, and assure you by word of mouth of the great love and interest I bear you. My two young companions wish as much as I do to express their affection and their thanks for the privilege you offer us of being able to work in more than one place to make Him known, whom alone they love.

We shall set out on November 22nd. We were not able to fix an earlier day, as our change of house made it impossible for me to leave before this date. Remember me to your companions, and ask them not to forget me in their prayers. We are praying for them here. As we are soon to be one, let us begin now to be united in our Lord.

It is clear from this letter that Father Varin had pleaded Mother Duchesne's cause. He had arrived at Amiens at the end of October. Shortly afterwards, he laid before the little community the project of founding a house of the Society at Grenoble, but no one, at first, thought it possible that any could be spared to go thither for the purpose. Yet Father Varin had made up his mind. "You might," he said slowly, looking around him, "send one or two. You, for instance," looking at Mother Barat, "and this novice," indicating Sister Debrosse, who was on the eve of making her vows. "With one lay-sister this would be enough." All expressed their astonishment, and he hastened to continue: "You will find some there already, but *one* especially, . . . and if she were quite alone at the ends of the earth, you ought to go in search of her." Then he expatiated on the great gifts and the great virtue of Madame Duchesne. The conviction with which he spoke, left no doubt in the minds of his hearers as to the will of God, and the foundation, with the sacrifices it involved, was accepted.

On the 21st of November, Sisters de Charbonnel, du Terrail, and Debrosse made their vows in the chapel of the Oratoire. The latter was to accompany Mother Barat on her journey, with Sister Marguerite. The house at Amiens was left to the care of Madame Baudemont, who before the Revolution had been a Poor Clare, and by character and disposition was well-fitted for responsibility and command.

When Mother Barat, in after days, spoke of this separation she used to say : " I was chosen to go because I was the one who could most easily be spared," and if she saw a look of incredulity on the countenances around her, she insisted that this was so, and added that she had just been replaced as class-mistress because she had been ill. Her parting words were : " Try with all your might to obtain humility, for it is the groundwork of all virtue ; and look upon that day as lost in which you have not made some act of it. Love to be unknown, seek out the lowest place, and if God allows any humiliation to come upon you, be glad of it, and joyfully take advantage of the opportunity for growing more humble."

Long years afterwards, she asked Mother de Charbonnel whether she remembered their first separation, adding : " It was the day after your vows. Father Barat had said to us : 'I expect, from your generosity, that not one of you will shed a tear.' Oh, it was a hard moment ! "

We see how Father Varin reckoned on the generosity of Mother Barat and her Sisters in religion, when he wrote to Mother Duchesne on November 18th, from Amiens : " Unite yourself in a special way to Mother Barat's community on November 21st. No day in the year is so dear to them, as it is the birthday of their Society. It will be a new birthday also for some amongst them, and on both accounts it will therefore be a day of holy joy, which the thought of the morrow, far from diminishing, will only increase."

When Mother Barat and her two companions left the threshold of the Oratoire, to set out on this long journey of six hundred miles, to be made by the public coaches, and at the beginning of winter, her heart must have been strong

indeed if it did not sink, both at the thought of what she was leaving, and at the prospect before her. Yet this was but the first of almost innumerable journeys, each one of which added its share of hardship and suffering to the long martyrdom of her life. Letters of encouragement from Father Varin reached her several times on her journey. The first was in Paris, where she stayed two days. He told her that her convent was full of peace and fervour, that he had twice called together the community, and that he intended to do so as often as she could wish, that two days previously he had told them that things would go better than ever in her absence, not that she must think herself an obstacle to good being done, but because God wished them to see that her journey was in the order of His will, and that He has need of no one. "Oh, my dear Sister in Jesus Christ," he added, "you promised me that our Lord should find in you, one according to His Heart, a great and generous soul, a soul always ready to enter into His designs, without being astounded at their greatness or their difficulty. Remember this, and often say : *Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum.*"

By Father Varin's advice, Mother Barat's next halt was at Joigny, where she stayed for a week, both to see her father and mother, and to arrange for the education of her sister's children. The time had come for her to fulfil the half promise she had made four years previously ; and she was able now to relieve Madame Dusaussoy of a share of her burden.

Another letter from Father Varin met her at Lyons, where she stayed for a few days to see some postulants. After encouraging her, and giving good news of her community, he wrote : "A soul who is to win others, or to train them, must not be little or narrow, but great and wide, wide as the ocean. St. Francis Xavier undertook to convert the world because his soul was greater than the world."

A few days later he wrote again : "Have a lively faith, a faith that pierces the heavens, which opens to you the Heart of our Lord, and shows you the abyss of His goodness and mercy. This will fill you with courage and confidence, and you

will be the valiant woman who is so seldom found. *Mulierem fortem quis inveniet? Procul* . . . . Afar. We shall not need to go further than Grenoble in search of her."

On December 12th, her twenty-fifth birthday, she was still travelling, but the next day brought her to her journey's end. Throughout the day, she had been in sight of the magnificent panorama of the snow-capped Alps that surround Grenoble, the first mountains she had ever seen. Her way lay through the valley of the Isère whose waters, after forming a semicircle round part of Grenoble, are joined, a little below the town, by by those of the Drac. Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut stands half way up one of the nearest spurs of the Alps, just beyond the river, with the town at its feet. Mother Barat and her companions, after passing through Grenoble and crossing the Isère by a bridge, began to ascend the rugged side of the mountain by a steep and straggling street of dark houses, built during the wars of the League, until a sudden turn brought them to a sort of arch, or monumental gateway, bearing the following inscription: "St. Francis of Sales chose this site to found the fourth monastery of the Order of the Visitation of Sainte-Marie. The first stone was laid in his presence on October 16th, 1619."

This was their destination, and Mother Duchesne was there to receive them. "I had never seen an enclosed convent," Mother Barat said afterwards, when describing their first meeting. "When I was sent to Grenoble, I asked what I should have to do, but the only answer I received was, 'Go'—so I went. At the entrance of a small corridor, very low and damp, I saw Mother Duchesne coming towards us, and she threw herself at my feet to kiss them, applying to me the words that belong to the mission of the Apostles and their successors: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings.' From sheer astonishment, I did not prevent it. I was thunder-struck at so much faith and humility, and knew neither what to do nor what to say."

The dark corridor in which this memorable meeting took place led to a quadrangular cloister surrounding a square plot of turf enlivened by flower-beds; in the centre was a stone

cross. From the cloister a passage led to the nuns' choir, where in a corner stood the confessional used by St. Francis of Sales, as well as the stall and *prie-Dieu* of St. Jane Frances, the place where she was in prayer when she heard, at the moment of the death of St. Francis of Sales, a voice that said: "He is no more." The chapel, like the rest of the house, bore sad marks of the hard times through which it had passed, but traces of much of its former beauty remained. The marble altars, wall-paintings, carved stalls, and the guilding of the sanctuary were still there, though defaced by time and ill-usage.

No doubt Mother Barat's first visit was to the chapel, where she fervently thanked God for all His goodness. Mother Duchesne wrote: "A thousand times do I bless God for having destined me to prepare the dwelling-place where so many souls will come to hear His word, and to carry its fruits afar into the world. Still more blessed shall I be, if, in spite of my unworthiness, I am nevertheless received, by His pure mercy, to fight under the standard of our Lord Jesus Christ, to rescue souls from our common enemy, to make them His." And as she felt more deeply the impossibility of putting into words all her heart contained, she added: "It is useless to try to express our gladness, it all comes from our Lord, to whom we owe this priceless cause of rejoicing. It should therefore be all in Him; and to Him, more than to any one else, should we speak of it in humble gratitude." A few lines further on she says: "Now the time has come for me to be silent. My part is only to obey, and to say in deepest thanksgiving: *The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.*" "The longed-for day came at last," one of Mother Duchesne's companions wrote. "It is impossible to describe the impression our new Mother made upon us, so young still, as she is, yet so full of wisdom and maturity."

Mother Duchesne was ten years older than Mother Barat, and hard trials had but strengthened the energy of a will that was firm with an hereditary strength, derived from many generations of resolute ancestors. Several amongst the Duchesnes had risen to eminence in various careers of life, and

members of her mother's family, the Periers, are in the front rank in our own day. But if the women of the Duchesne family had their full share of this characteristic strength of will, they had also the gift of lively faith, and several amongst them had preceded Philippine in the Visitation convent of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut. The *Duchesne character* was proverbial in that community for energetic pursuit of good, but never was it more forcibly displayed than by Philippine, when, after the downfall of all her hopes, she turned her face in the direction whence the light from the dawn of a new day shone upon her soul, and gave herself and all she had to be moulded by the gentle hand of her young Superior.

CHAPTER VII

SAINTE-MARIE-D'EN-HAUT. 1805.

Leave me, O love which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

WHEN Mother Barat came to take possession of a convent that had received religious belonging to several Orders, she naturally foresaw that many difficulties might occur in doing away with long-established customs, and substituting others for them. Father Varin had given her the following wise advice: "In the work of reform," he said, "patience is more necessary than ardour, prudence is better than zeal. Hearts must first be won, and the rest follows quietly, without disturbance. Be on your guard against the wish to have every thing perfect at once." At the end of December, he gave her the maxim which she always adhered to as a practical rule of guidance: "Firmness sometimes, harshness never, charity and gentleness everywhere and always."

Her desire was to form a noviceship as soon as possible, that Mother Duchesne and her four companions might be trained to religious life. The season of the year was well suited to this scheme. "Christmas was drawing near," Mother Duchesne wrote, "and to study our Lord and the crib at Bethlehem was the natural occupation of those who

were striving to imitate the virtues of the Divine Infant. Our Mother kept Him constantly before our minds. At every recreation, she put on the table before her a little figure of our Lord in the manger, to teach us to love Him, as she did, with all our heart. We offered Him what we had to give, — something, at any rate, that we cared for — and we offered it through the hands of our Superior, to win, by this act of confidence, a loving glance from that perfect Model of religious dependence and poverty in the crib."

There was much, even in the house of Sainte-Marie, which, when Christmas came, was singularly in keeping with the poverty and humiliation of the stable. In spite of Mother Duchesne's good-will, she had not been able to repair all the damage caused by ten years of desertion and neglect. Three windows and a door were wanting to the church, and in several places the snow found free entrance to the house. "The cold was very great, but we did not feel it," Mother Duchesne wrote. Her austerity led her to think nothing of privations and hardships which others would have accounted very penitential, and her great strength of constitution made her able to bear them without injury. It did not occur to her that others might require what she could do without, and, in consequence, Mother Barat had plenty of opportunities at Sainte-Marie of satisfying her love of suffering.

About the middle of January, Father Roger came to give a retreat. As he feared that Madame Duchesne and her companions might have a deeply-rooted attachment to certain forms to which they had been accustomed, and which were incompatible with the spirit of the Institute of the Sacred Heart, he took care to insist on the spirit of detachment necessary for conformity to the will of God, but he met only with the utmost docility. The gratings disappeared, customs usual in enclosed Orders were given up, in short, nothing was an obstacle to union of minds and hearts. When the retreat was over, Father Roger asked every one to take to Mother Barat anything they valued, and as Mother Duchesne brought nothing, he asked her why. Her answer was ready : "I could

not take her the house and the people in it, and I value nothing else." Father Roger went away quite satisfied.

Henceforth, a new rule of life came into force, and the house became a regular noviceship. Among the novices was Emilie Giraud, who, for some months, had been one of the ten girls who, at that time, formed the school at Sainte-Marie. Emilie, on whom Mother Duchesne had lavished special care, kept aloof at first from Mother Barat, fearing that she would stand between her and Mother Duchesne, but she held out only for a short time: like every one else, she was won by Mother Barat's kindness. The whole of her future life shows how she responded to the loving guidance of her Superior.

Mother Duchesne so completely set aside any claims to consideration, which her age and her position as foundress of the house might have brought her, that she was like a child with her Superior, and the only difficulty she gave was to keep within bounds her insatiable thirst for mortification. Amongst other things, she habitually mingled bitter herbs with her food. Mother Barat forbade this, fearing its effect upon her health. Mother Duchesne yielded, but, when her obedience on this point had lasted a certain time, she renewed her request. Mother Barat then allowed it. "If you can do it," she said, "without my seeing it." As Mother Duchesne's place was next to Mother Barat's at table, she feared she had not gained much by this leave. Experience, however, before long proved to her that Mother Barat's habitual recollection was so deep that she saw little or nothing of what went on around, or even beside her. So Mother Duchesne did as she chose on this point. It was in consequence of this discovery that, on the eve of Mother Barat's departure, Mother Duchesne, partly from fun (for her austerity was no hindrance to her playfulness), partly that others might share the knowledge of what had edified her so much, wrote in large letters and hung over her Superior's chair the text from the Canticle of Canticles: "Awake not my beloved, till she please."

But whilst Mother Barat was moderating the zeal of others, Father Varin was often obliged to insist on prudence in her

own case. "You must have received my letter complaining of the way you overtax your strength," he wrote on January 31st, "I repeat that if you do not alter your course, you will certainly depart from the order of God's providence, and what a misfortune that would be! The devil is cunning enough for any thing! Take care of yourself as to rest, food, and talking, or else I shall say: 'Do what you will!' and what a will that would be to set in the place of God's!" On February 13th, he wrote: "Your brother was with me when I got your letter, and he shrugged his shoulders when he heard of your courageous determination to fast in Lent. Really I cannot make you out! For Heaven's sake, take advice as to the care of your body, as you do for that of your soul. If there is no other reason for seeing a doctor, you do not need his authority. You have already the authority of the doctors of Amiens and Paris, and above all the authority of the natural law of God, and of the Church, which (1) forbids you to be guilty of your own death, (2) commands you to take the means for fulfilling the duties of your state. Say a word on the subject to your confessor; his approval is enough, and certainly in conscience he is bound to order you not to think of keeping Lent." If Father Barat blamed his sister for her austerity, he often was reproached by Father Varin for having taught her how to walk in that path. "That is your doing, you ruined her health!" Father Varin would say, and Father Barat would humbly and sorrowfully acknowledge his mistake.

The other novices were Marie Rivet, who, until Mother Barat came, had been the Superior, Marie Balastron, and Jeanne Second. Mother Barat gave them a conference or instruction every day, but her example taught them even more than her words. It was Mother Duchesne's delight to watch her praying on the spot where the tradition of Sainte-Marie said that St. Jane Frances used to kneel. She would place herself opposite, on the other side, to pray in union with her: "But," she said humbly, "when our Mother is there I feel that our Lord so much likes her to talk to Him, that He has little inclination for my company!"

As at Amiens, Mother Barat made herself all things to all; the children and the nuns had each their share of her time, as well as of her thoughts. They profited also by the training she gave the mistresses with regard to their work in the school, and a great increase of the good done was the effect of her teaching.

Two causes of trouble, however, soon arose. The first, happily, did not last long; it came from a plan of the military authorities to take possession of Sainte-Marie for a barrack. The decree of approbation asked for and obtained from the First Consul saved the house. Father Varin did not know that the danger was over when he wrote from Paris in February, 1805: "What you tell me of your uncertainty as to keeping your convent gives me no more anxiety than it gives you, and you know that this is not from indifference to your interests. I think that this new community at Grenoble would be unworthy of your adoption, if it were not established on the same foundations as those our Lord has given to your other convent. Whatever happens, you must all have no other thoughts in your hearts, or words on your lips than: *Sit nomen Domini benedictum*, and: *Diligentibus Deum, omnia cooperantur in bonum.*"

This short-lived anxiety was soon succeeded by another. Ill-natured reports were spread, about the doings at Sainte-Marie and the new inmates of the convent. "Who were these nuns? Why did they lead so penitential a life? Was all as it should be?" Others, without going to these lengths, criticized the firmness with which unsuitable postulants were rejected, questioned the efficiency of the mistresses of the school, or ridiculed their youth, and especially that of the Superior. . . . "As if," Mother Duchesne says, "God's gifts were only given at some definite age, and His Spirit were dependent on our poor human nature! For my part, when I saw our Mother act always under the guidance of God, who directed her; when I put in one scale the unction of her words, and in the other the bitterness of those who attacked her, I had no difficulty in distinguishing passion from virtue, and I laughed at this turmoil, which might impede for a time the work of God, but could not destroy it."

Towards the middle of Lent, Mother Barat left Grenoble for Lyons, to arrange with Father Varin, who was also expected there, about a proposed foundation at Belley. It must have been about this time also that Mother Geneviève Deshayes came from Amiens to Grenoble. The following letter to Mother Duchesne is the first of a long series, extending with few intervals, over nearly fifty years.

Lyons, March 27th, 1805.

I wish to let you know at once that I received your little note. I had no scruple in dwelling for a minute in the pleasure it gave me. You see I do not blame you for the treat you had on Sunday evening, provided you were disposed to give it up willingly if your provoking Mother had sent you to bed.

This treat was a night-watch before the Blessed Sacrament. Mother Barat prevented Mother Duchesne from making these vigils as frequently as she would have desired.

I am sure you did not forget me before God. If I had not been away, I should have spent those three hours in the chapel with you. I hope to make up for this on Maundy Thursday, if I am back by that time. You see I am provoked too; our Lord must wish me to feel what I put others through when I provoke them. Father Varin only leaves Paris to-morrow, so I shall probably be here for ten days. This is a week quite wasted. As soon as I have had some talks with the good Father, I shall fly back to you. What a different life mine is here from our usual ways! We are two hours at dinner, and have to keep up conversation all that time. I should like to see you opposite to me; how you would look! Now allow that your vexations are nothing to mine.

But I see a malicious smile on your lips, and I hear you say: At least our Mother must regret Sainte-Marie, and I am sure that more than once she hast cast longing eyes at our house. Well, yes; I constantly turn in that direction, and am amongst you all. I even count upon bidding a long good-bye to Lyons and giving all my thoughts to Grenoble. I see you have prayed for my conversion; pray now that it may last, and I, on my part, will pray that my stay with you may not injure that holy house.

If you only knew what I am plotting against you! . . . Make your mind easy; I wish nothing but your good; and all I have and am is

yours. Pray earnestly for the graces I need, and all will be well. . . . You understand I am not referring to any new sacrifices to be made; you might think it was so and be uneasy. No, only acquire continual self-renunciation, the spirit of meekness and humility, the spirit of prayer, &c. Set about this with confidence and peace. I am longing for fuller news from you. You know what interests me most is the progress of your soul; tell me more of this than of the affairs of the house though I am not indifferent to these.

Believe in the tender affection of her who is very closely united to you in our good Master,—SOPHIE BARAT.

A week later she wrote again.

Lyons, April 5th, 1805.

I have received your letter, my dear child, and need I say how much pleasure it gave me? You know too well the tender interest I take in you, not to have understood what a comfort this account of your dispositions and of your resolutions was to me. You are afraid that your weakness will prevent you from keeping up to the right standard, and you ask me to promise to continue to help you to the end, and not grow weary of your slow progress. You know me very little if you need such a promise. Our Lord, who has given you to us, has fixed no limit to this charge but that of death. Until then, if I can help you, I will do so with all my heart. I do not belong to myself but to you. Each day shows it to me more plainly, so no more fears on this subject. Read this sentence over again if you like, and let there be an end of the matter. I smiled only over one word in your letter; guess which. . . . The epithet you applied to me seemed to me very much misapplied; it could not in fact have been more so. A little thought would have made you see it yourself. If, without failing in the respect you owe your Superior, you could have called her *unworthy*, *wretched*, &c., it would have been more true and therefore more pleasing. If you do not venture to use these words, at least let us have those only that are not untrue.

I shall be here for a fortnight more. You will know why later on. I cannot express the weariness I should feel of it, if I were not upheld by the thought that it is God's will.

Experience of the Cross was indeed not wanting to Mother Barat at that time. The ill-natured reports about her grew more active by her absence from Grenoble, and she was said to have deserted the house, finding the position untenable.

On the 24th of April, Father Varin wrote :

I understood your state of mind when I left you, but how happy we are when we are able to make every thing help to raise our soul to God. Times of trial are certainly those when we get nearest to Him. Remember what we have said sometimes : When God wills to unite souls to Himself He makes them go through severe trials. The poor heart must bleed so often that at last not one drop of blood is left. Then it can say : "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Yes, yes, the Cross is the road by which *you* must walk, and *I*, and *others*, and yet we must not think it heavy. It is by pretending that we find it light that we shall induce Him who makes crosses, never to let us be without one, and then we shall have nothing to fear and nothing to wish for, except David's wish : *Unam petii a Domino, hanc requiram ut inhabitem in domo Domini omnibus diebus vitæ meæ.* I assure you, I shared the joy that came to you in your audience of the Holy Father, the day I left. The many blessings he gave you are a happy pledge of the future lot of those for whom he gave them. Before going to the Holy Father, I suspect you paid your court to Him of whom the Pope is only the vicar, and that the Master spoke to His servant's heart.

This letter tells us of the privilege which Mother Barat had during her stay in Lyons, of seeing Pope Pius VII. on his return to Italy, after the coronation of the Emperor Napoleon I., in Paris. His journey through France was made quite a triumph by the enthusiastic devotion of the Catholic population, and certainly none amongst all the loyal subjects who thronged around him, had a heart more full of love and veneration than Mother Barat's. She heard the Holy Father's Mass, received Communion from his hand, and had an audience, in which the blessing of the Vicar of Jesus Christ was asked, for the first time, in the name of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

On the 20th of May, Mother Barat returned to Grenoble, and was received with utmost joy. Her return, however, seems to have made her feel doubly the weight of the only cross to which her resignation was not equal, — that of superiority. We know this from the letter Father Varin wrote to her, dated :

Roanne, June 1st, 1805.

Shall I say that you are the headless lady? No, not that, but I will say: *O duræ cervicis!* stiff-necked soul! You would not own that I was right until you had brought yourself to death's door by your imprudence. Do you remember that your house could not get on without *three instructions a day?* I thought *one* would be enough, and even doubted whether your strength would hold out so far. Now the house must get on as best it may without a word from you. Will this give you experience? Do you understand that two wills hold sway in you, God's will and your own, and that the latter often is preferred? Do you understand that God wills absolutely that you should take all possible alleviations as regards sleep, food, and silence? You may remember these were the very expressions I used some months ago in my letters. Who was right?

But enough of scolding on this head. Now for another far more serious topic, and one on which I am much more strict. I may, you write, be glad to see you on this rugged road if it leads to Heaven, *but*,—you add—if, as I am obliged to believe, it is leading me to . . . "Oh! blind and ungrateful soul," our Lord exclaims when He hears you speak thus. "I have done all I can to teach her to know me, and she always persists in refusing to acknowledge me as the best and tenderest of Masters, and Friends, and Spouses. This road leads her to . . . let her finish the phrase . . . it leads her to Calvary, whither I call My servants and especially My best-beloved, and from thence to Heaven, to the bosom of My Father." Do you hear our Lord? He is right, and you speak like one distraught. Will you now grow rational? Repeat over and over again to our Lord: "Yes, yes, my confidence, my hope are in Thee. I see my place in Heaven, it is near Thy Throne; Thou keepest it for me; who can rob me of it? Thou hast conquered the strong man armed, Thou hast conquered the world; Thou art in me, and I in Thee. *Dominus protector vitæ meæ, a quo trepidabo?*"

Now, to conclude. Do you wish our Lord to be pleased with you, to take delight in you? *Peace, joy, confidence;* confidence *always* in joy. *Gaudete, iterum dico, gaudete.*

Mother Barat had brought with her from Lyons, as a postulant, Henriette Girard, in whose mind were still floating, vaguely, some of the false reports against the Society, which had been urged upon her in the world to prevent her entrance, and she did not intend to shut her eyes to any thing

she did not understand. She had not been long at Sainte-Marie when she was struck by an apparent contradiction. She could not doubt that great happiness reigned around her, and yet she often heard her Superior insist on love of the Cross. "They are hiding the truth from me," she said to herself, "there is something underneath all this," and to set her mind at rest on the subject, she one day asked Mother Deshayes to tell her the secret. "Our cross," Mother Deshayes answered, "is our not loving God as we ought and wish to love Him, not seeing Him loved as He deserves to be loved, not being able to make Him known and loved, by all creatures. That is our heaviest cross, and the one that makes all others light; it is not burdensome because by bearing it, by keeping it always in view, we lighten its weight, and hope to see it diminish by our prayers and efforts."

In August, Father Varin paid a visit to Sainte-Marie, and found everything in excellent order. "Tell them all," he wrote to Mother Barat, a few days after his departure, "how much joy and comfort I felt at seeing their happiness. It will but increase as long as it rests on the same principles, humility, simplicity, and charity." In the course of the autumn, Mother Grosier came from Amiens to Grenoble, but not to stay long. A foundation had been resolved on at Belley, and she went there in December, 1805, to take charge of the house as Superior. This arrangement only lasted two years, after which the school was made over again to its original owner.

Another visitor to Sainte-Marie during this autumn was Father Barat. His visit was a pleasure to the community, but for their Superior a cause of renewed suffering. Father Varin wrote to her shortly afterwards:

I am not surprised to hear how your patience is tried by the outside world. Remember how your convent at Amiens was exercised in the same way; the new foundation must have its share of the bitter cup. But what does surprise me is the other kind of trial, which conversations with your brother have rather increased than lessened. Have you not yet found out whence they come? that the Evil One is their

author? and if you have found this out, are you still taken in by him? Oh! I beg of you, let all these vain anxieties vanish before I come. Do you want an angel from Heaven to reassure you? And if you refuse to believe our Lord, in the person of His minister, would you believe an angel? Courage, confidence, and holy daring.

Mother Barat was anxious, at this time, to have written Rules for the guidance of the new Institute. Till then, the Summary of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus had been their code, but it was clear that this could be for a time only, and that the Rules of St. Ignatius would require adaptation to the Society of the Sacred Heart. The time had not come for a complete elaboration of the Constitutions of the new Society, but it was necessary to have at least some plan of the Institute to show the Bishop of Grenoble, before the novices of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut could be admitted to their vows.

A plan of the Institute was therefore drawn up by Fathers Varin and Roger, and was preceded by a memoir composed by Mothers Barat and Duchesne. The memoir, after a rapid summary of the work of the little Society during the five years of its existence, went on to allege the shortness of the time it had existed, and the necessity of learning by experience to adapt means to ends, to account for there being, as yet, no written Rule. The subjoined plan, the memoir added, contained substantially the whole end, spirit, and regulations of the Association. It would serve as the basis to the work of a fuller development of the Constitutions, which would be undertaken without delay. The *end* of the Association is the perfection of its members, and the salvation of souls. Its *spirit*, is detachment from the world and from self, purity of intention for the glory of God, zeal and gentleness towards our neighbour, and great obedience to our Superiors. The *means* are: For the religious, a noviceship and their spiritual exercises. For others, schools for the upper classes, and free education for the poor. Retreats for ladies of the world.

As to *Rules*.—(1) All the houses are under one Superior General. (2) Every thing is in common. The manner of life is

to be simple and ordinary. No austerities or extraordinary fasts are enjoined by Rule. There will be every day a meditation of an hour in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon, spiritual reading, and two examinations of conscience. The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin will be said.

The Bishop of Grenoble gave his approval to the document submitted to him, and, on the 21st of November, Mother Duchesne and her companions made their vows, whilst Mother Barat and the nuns who had been with her at Amiens, renewed those they had made previously. Father Varin preached, taking as his text the words of Moses to the Israelites : "This day shall be celebrated amongst you," a text which future events stamped as prophetic. Mother Duchesne writes : "Beyond the happiness which we all find in living under obedience to our Mother, there is the joy of watching the growth of the work prepared only by our desires, but now, please God, to be realized for His glory."

Mother Duchesne's desires were to be more far-reaching in their consequences than any one could at that time foresee. Meanwhile, each day strengthened the bonds of the friendship, in and for God, that united in His love her heart and that of Mother Barat.

CHAPTER VIII

FIRST GENERAL CONGREGATION. 1805–1806.

Great souls are always loyally submissive, — reverent to what is set over them ; only small, mean souls are otherwise. — CARLYLE.

MOTHER Duchesne's happiness was unclouded on the day of her vows, but, on the following Sunday, Father Varin announced that Mother Barat would leave Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut that week, to return to Amiens, where the election of a Superior General for the Society of the Sacred Heart was to take place immediately.

It was with a certain natural joy, added to her supernatural desire to accomplish God's will, that Mother Barat set out on her journey. Convinced, as she was, of her incapacity as Superior, she could not but believe that others must, by this time, view things in the same light, and she was firmly persuaded that, once at Amiens, she should find her charge made over into abler hands.

She arrived there on December 14th, 1805, with Sister Marguerite Maillard. She found every thing apparently in excellent order, a fact which was ascribed to the rule of the Superior, Madame Baudemont, whose vigorous sway was felt in every part of the house.

Madame Baudemont had undoubted talents for the position in which she was placed, but there was something wanting. The Revolution had forced her from her convent at Rheims, and, when peace was restored, she had formed a plan for re-establishing the Order of Poor Clares, with some modifications of her own. She had tried in vain to obtain the necessary

authorization for these changes, and, when she heard of the convent of the *Dilette*, she wrote to Father Varin, with a view to joining it. His answer, at first, was not very encouraging. He spoke of the wide difference between being called to found or reform an Order and fulfilling the daily round of duties of one of the *Dilette di Gesù*. He said the two vocations were incompatible in the same person, and advised her to reconsider her idea. Finding that she held to it, he wrote to her to go to the Rue Martin-Bleu-Dieu, at Amiens, while awaiting the necessary dispensations from her solemn vows. "You know," he said, "how crowded the poor school is there; I should be glad to see you working in it, with Mdlle Loquet and her companions."

We gather from the verdict of her contemporaries an idea of Madame Baudemont's somewhat inconsistent characteristics. One, writing of her, says: "The cast of her mind fitted her rather for the creation of a new Institute than for taking the form of one that already existed. She had uncommon strength of will and persevering energy. She was severe towards herself and others, and yet there was a certain freedom from restraint in her intercourse with those whose confidence she wished to gain. She attached them to her rather by esteem and respect than by love." "She was irreproachable," another says, "and, from first to last, we saw nothing that was not perfectly religious in her manner of acting."

Yet Father Varin was uneasy, and he long held out against putting her at the head of affairs. When she was named Superior at Amiens, he did his best to obviate the disadvantages which he feared would follow. He wrote to her in March, 1805: "You must be gentle in government. Try to show great deference, especially to the older members of the community; take their advice, when necessary, and maintain charity, which ought to be practised *perfectly* amongst us. Be very much on your guard against any thing authoritative in manner, or even in tone of voice. Sometimes, indeed often, when you are taken up with your own thoughts, this shows itself unawares."

This want of gentleness and deference were rather fostered

than repressed by the growing influence exercised over Madame Baudemont and her house by a priest of Amiens, M. de Saint-Estève. He might have been very useful if he had restricted his zeal within the limits of his office as confessor of the community, for he had entered the Society of the Fathers of the Faith, and had spent some time under their guidance. Unfortunately the due limits were exceeded, and circumstances favoured the natural bent of his mind towards enterprise and innovation. "He was a literary man," Mother Deshayes writes, "with a brilliant imagination, but always *on the climb:* an unquiet and ever-active genius."

Soon after Mother Barat's departure for Grenoble, and still more when Mothers Deshayes and Grosier had also left Amiens, his influence, through that of Madame Baudemont, became paramount in the house. Order and regularity reigned everywhere, it is true, but unseen "a germ of destruction" was at work.

When, in December, 1805, Mother Barat came back to Amiens, nothing was further from her thoughts than the wish to dispute Madame Baudemont's authority. Her only desire was to take, before others, the place she always occupied in her own eyes,— the last and lowest. At this time, through her means, her little nephew, Louis Dusaussoy, was at the school of the Fathers of the Faith in Amiens. "When I went to see my aunt," he tells us, "I was always made much of by the pupils and the nuns, but in spite of this kind reception, I remember that the first time she took me to the chapel at the convent, I was so ashamed of my awkward manner and the cut of my little jacket, that I hid in a corner. But my aunt found me, and put me near the altar, in full view of everybody. Certainly, her humility must have been satisfied, for my appearance was no credit to her." Her lowly parentage was the only circumstance concerning herself which Mother Barat never failed to put forward. Between her and Madame Baudemont, the difference was as wide as it could well be. The election now at hand was to decide, one way or other, the future of the Society.

On January, 18th, 1806, all those in the house who had made their vows met for the important decision, and the votes of the others were forwarded from Grenoble and Belley. Father Varin, assisted by Father Roger, presided, and Monsieur de Saint-Estève was present as a witness. The result of the voting gave Mother Barat a majority of *one vote*. It was noted at the time, that this casting-vote was that of Sister Marguerite, who had been raised from the rank of lay-sister to that of choir nun.

It would be vain to attempt to describe what Mother Barat felt when the result of the election was known. A few lines from one of her letters to Mother Duchesne, suggest even more by their omissions than they express in words.

She wrote on January 20th, 1806. "It is time I should answer your questions, as this letter has been interrupted for some days. Many things have happened to your Mother in this interval. I am still trying to be resigned, and can think of little else. Pray for me, and forgive my silence." At the end of the letter, she added: "Go on praying to *your saint* (St. Francis Regis) for me; he hears your prayers, but he does not do me the same favour. However, perhaps it will not be for long, and so much the better for all of you."

Resignation on this head was a life-long struggle to Mother Barat, and especially acute in her early years. She more than once confessed that, during her journeys, she was often seized with a great desire to bury herself in the depths of some forest, to live there unknown and alone with God. "I remember," she said once, "that going through the Landes, near Bordeaux, I cast envious glances on those desert tracts which seemed so well-fitted for my scheme. I thought it would be the height of happiness to get down at the next halt, and bury myself in some solitary spot, hidden from the sight of all. I saw it clearly in my mind's eye, and revelled in it. Meanwhile the coach rolled on, and when we stopped it was in the middle of a village. My delightful dream vanished."

A week after the election, a letter from Mother Duchesne opened a wide vista for the future. On the feast of the

Epiphany, a great missionary, Dom Augustine de Lestrange, came to Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut. In Mother Duchesne's presence, he pleaded in forcible terms the cause of the forsaken populations of America, especially of those of Louisiana, and his words drew her desires irresistibly to the foreign missions. She was too much of an apostle not to have the ardour of a missionary, and this call woke up old aspirations, which had been for the time suppressed in her new-found happiness. On the third morning after this visit, she was making her meditation in the children's dormitory. The subject was the journey of the Wise Men from the East, and she was filled with the desire of imitating their detachment. She recognized that her love for her convent of Sainte-Marie was too strong and tender; she gave it up and resolved to offer herself for the missions of China or some other distant country. On the 23rd, she wrote for this purpose to Mother Barat. Her letter is lost, but we have Mother Barat's reply, an outburst of gratitude for this answer to her prayers:

Amiens, February 3rd, 1806.

Your letter was a great joy to me, my dear child; it touched a very tender chord in my heart. I felt that my prayers were heard. I had been asking for this ever since our Lord had given you to me, and I often prayed for it very ardently, because I was convinced that He wished for this devotedness, this complete sacrifice at your hands. I had another interest that I can tell you now. It is one of my secrets. Even before I knew our little Society, the desire of carrying the knowledge of God to heathen nations was in the depths of my heart. When I became acquainted with the Fathers of the Faith it increased very much, and St. Francis Xavier, whose life I read, became my patron. Many graces which I obtained through his intercession made me hope my prayer was granted, and that he would, one day, lead me to the people who "dwell in the shadow of death." Once, when this desire was stronger within me than usual, I spoke of it to one to whom our Lord had given the same wish, and from whom I hoped to receive a favourable answer. But it was far otherwise! My sentence was: "No, you are destined for France, you will seldom leave it; that is your battlefield." I dismissed the notion that this person was a prophet, and persuaded myself it was

a mistake. But all the same it saddened me, and I tried to be resigned, if such were indeed God's will. Time showed me it was no mistake, and what has just happened confirms this idea; unless the arrangement is cancelled, I am nailed to France, or its vicinity. Have I then given up my project? No, the same desire increases daily, and I pray that one of my companions may carry it out, that the Holy Spirit Himself will prepare her and lead her on. If we cannot go so far in our own life-time, may some one, who comes after us, be allowed to accomplish the work! Meanwhile, may there be amongst us souls given to prayer, and so fitted for the task, souls burning with zeal for the conversion of those that "sit in darkness," and able to enkindle the sacred fire in others, that when God's good time has come some may be found ready.

And now, dear child, I seem to see you kneeling at the feet of our Lord and of your unworthy Mother, to ask her whether she destines you for the work, or rather, whether you are called to it by our Lord. You are waiting for the *yes* that you have sought. It seems to you long in coming, and yet I must ask you to let me again defer it. I say instead: "Hope on, foster these desires, try to grow more worthy of the signal favour you long for. We will both pray most particularly for this intention. How happy I should be if our Lord, who has so many reasons for disdaining my service, were to accept yours. Ah, it would then be my turn to kneel before you, and beg that you would take me as your little servant.

But before this time comes,—this time which we must hasten by fervent prayer and by avoiding the smallest faults—you must know that it is possible that there may soon be an opening for us; Father Varin and I were busy about it, almost at the very time that our Lord inspired you with these desires. You feel the importance of keeping this secret. No one must suspect it. I will say no more about it now; but when I come, I will keep nothing from you. It will be a delight to me to talk to you about what is nearest to my heart. I have said enough to increase your love, and, if you are grateful, to make you exclaim: *Quid retribuam Domino.*

I felt the need of talking over all this with you, to whom God has given the same desire of making Him known and loved. I hope that, being more faithful than I have been, you will set no bounds to His mercy. If anything can compensate for the sorrow of not spending oneself for our Lord, your Mother will find that compensation in your being chosen instead of her, to give our adorable Master the glory which He has so much right to expect from you. If I could do as

I wish, I should start at once, and soon be in your mountains. It is true it would be an imperfection to escape from labour and sorrow, for this must be our daily bread. If our Lord suffers, why should we not suffer with Him? My daily torment is to see how persistently people lose their souls, in spite of the helps afforded by religion, and how young people who have been piously brought up, are led away and spoilt by pleasure.

After one short year's absence, how much of this I come across! It is useless to speak to them of God's love; to awaken fear and remorse is almost our only chance; in a moment of danger they may think of this. There would indeed be, as you say, much more consolation in bringing the knowledge of our Lord to those who never heard of Him; but must we give up the others because of the greater difficulty, and smaller satisfaction in teaching them? Oh no; we should labour until death to save even one soul.

What a high vocation is ours! May we taste its happiness to the full! We need nothing more to raise us to the highest perfection. Pray much during Lent, and do no more penances than I have allowed you. You must make your sacrifices beforehand. No night-watches at Shrove-tide. I am converted and cannot allow this any longer. I assure you I have great difficulty in making my conversion a heartfelt one, but if you knew how I have been talked to about it! . . . I was obliged to give in. . . . Love to all who are with you. All here send many affectionate messages. They are one with you in our Lord. Believe in the deep love I bear you, and with which I am your little servant,—SOPHIE BARAT.

Mother Duchesne's answer was full of gratitude for the hope held out to her. In spirit she already heard the words: "I send you . . . among wolves," from Mother Barat's lips.

Oh, if you could add: "As a lamb" [she exclaimed], but I am no better than I was when you left us. The stronger I feel for future work the more conscious I am of present cowardice. . . . I am longing to know what you have to tell me. . . . When you come, you must let me wait before you call me for our talk in the little room; the first eagerness must be sacrificed. . . . What a joy for me to feel your hand upon my head, and hear you say: "Mayest thou be blessed by Him in whose honour thou shalt be consumed.*" I hope I shall hear from you before Maundy Thursday, and that you will take away the

* Words used in the Church's liturgy for the blessing of incense.

prohibition ever to spend a *whole night* before the Blessed Sacrament. Oh, *please*, I want that one night to have leisure to talk to our Master.

Mother Barat's answer was dated :

Amiens, March 28th, 1806.

I was really getting anxious to hear from you, and you may judge from this with what pleasure I received your few lines, and read their contents. Do you really wish for this blessing ? *Ab illo benedicaris in cujus honorem cremaberis ?* How ambitious you are, and yet quite in your right. But how fervently and generously you must serve our Lord, to be worthy of it ! Yes, you must become a lamb ; otherwise, could we venture to say : *In cujus honorem ?* Would any other victim be acceptable to our Lord ? No, my dearest, He wants a lamb ; try to bring one up for Him, and begin at once. Wishes would be but waste of time, if they were only spent on a *future* perfection. You must bring your strength to bear on the *present*, by fidelity to the inspirations of grace, and attention to the interior voice which reproaches you with your shortcomings. *Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus.* Does He not often ask you to practise humility and gentleness, in a word to become a lamb ? . . . Yes, I too look forward to our talk in the little room. Meantime, pray for me. I want it more than ever.

This letter will no doubt reach you too late, but if not, I allow you to keep the vigil you ask for.

The letter however did arrive in time, and, on Good Friday, Mother Duchesne poured out her heart in gratitude to Mother Barat for the happiness of that whole night of prayer.

April 4th, 1806.

What good your letter did me ! and what a pleasure it was ! My heart had been harder than a rock for three weeks, but when I read your words it melted like wax at the fire. My eyes were no longer dry, and my heart felt a new joy ; all night it was glowing in me, for your letter came in time for the watching of Maundy Thursday night. I quite think my prayers have been heard for the second time on this blessed night ; my firm hope and peaceful joy make me think so. Oh, if it were to be before the year is out ! I almost ventured to hope it. All night I was in the New World, but I travelled in good company. First, I reverently gathered up all the Precious Blood from Gethsemane, the Prætorium, and Calvary. I then took possession of

our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist, and bearing my treasure I went forth to scatter it abroad, but without any fear that it would be exhausted. St. Francis Xavier helped me to make this priceless seed bear fruit, and prayed before God's throne that new lands might be opened to the light of truth. St. Francis Regis steered our course, with other saints jealous for God's glory. All went well, and no sorrow, not even holy sorrow, could find a corner in my heart, because it seemed to me that a new application was about to be made of the merits of Jesus Christ. The twelve hours of the night passed rapidly and without weariness, though on my knees, and yet the previous evening I thought I could not hold out for one hour. I had all my sacrifices to offer; a Mother, and what a Mother! Sisters, relations, my mountain! Then I was alone with our Lord, only surrounded by black children, rough and untaught: and I was happier in the midst of my little court than any prince of this world. . . . When you say to me: *Ecce ego mitto te*, I shall lose no time in saying: *Vadam*.

Mother Duchesne could not foresee then, that twelve long years had still to intervene between this night of desires and their realization; twelve years during which she was so to practise the virtues of patience, abnegation, and humility that during her life as a missionary their heroic exercise might lead her to a sanctity of which, at this time, she could scarcely dream.

As soon as the election of the Superior General had taken place, Father Varin resigned the authority he had hitherto held as Superior of the Society of the Sacred Heart. This resignation was partly a matter of prudence, that the nuns might not suffer from being connected with the Fathers of the Faith, who were at that time under suspicion of the Government, a suspicion which might at any moment turn to persecution. It was also prompted by his confidence in Mother Barat, and his desire that nothing should impede her action. He still continued, as before, to uphold and advise her; indeed he did so with increased zeal and charity, as her burden grew heavier year by year.

He wrote to her from Roanne on May 13th, 1806, and after assuring her of his continued prayers for the Society, he says:

I know that you will have a great deal to suffer before it is solidly established, but nothing alarms me, because I know also that our Lord will give you a heart larger than all you will suffer, and such a heart can obtain all things from Him. I congratulate you on having entered on your present path, and I congratulate myself on having helped to direct you towards it. In no other course would you have the thousandth part to bear of what awaits you here, only remember that your courage and faith must be steeped in tender and loving confidence in our Lord.

On the 16th, he writes again :

Take care of your health, and do not discard the precautions you have been advised to adopt. Do so above all with liberty of spirit, to please our Lord and conform yourself to His Divine will. Oh, yes, strip yourself entirely of your own will ; keep no remains of it even under pretext of devotion and higher perfection. The perfection I want of you is that there should be none of the interior struggle which I notice when your will is crossed, whether with regard to the place you hold or the mortifications you practise. I want you to be able to bear all with ease and freedom of spirit.

Mother Barat was at this time again at Grenoble, where she arrived from Amiens on the 20th of May. She did not remain long however, for a few weeks after her arrival Father Varin let her know that a foundation was asked for at Poitiers, and that it was necessary to set about it immediately. It was hard to part again, but this was a portion of her cross and accepted with her usual joyful serenity. If an interior struggle was sometimes manifest to Father Varin, it was so to no one else, for her daughters saw no trace of the suffering that was often so acute. With them she was always the same. Their spirit of faith was deepened and strengthened by her example, and there was no mistaking the close dependence on God which was the very breath of her life.

Father Varin wrote to her on June the 14th, in view of her departure :

Our Lord will not forget the fragile little bark that has put out to sea at His word. He will remember the pilot and the crew who have set sail in simple trust in Him, and with the hope of rendering Him service.

He will not leave them to their own inexperience and weakness. You tell me that you tremble at the thought of being an obstacle to the accomplishment of God's designs. . . . May God bless you, everlasting trembler that you are! Really I am at a loss to imagine what pleasure you can find in this constant trembling. My idea of pleasure is rather to make acts of hope and love. This joy is only heightened by the thought that our Lord's infinite mercy allows a poor ignorant sinner, without talent or power of his own, to hope with entire confidence and to love with absolute devotion. No, I shall only begin trembling when I turn my back on our Lord to give myself to the world. Nothing can make me tremble as long as I know that my will is to belong to Him; and my sins and miseries, far from diminishing my confidence, do but increase it.

May the spirit of Jesus *alone* reign in your heart, and cast out that other spirit for which I cannot find a name, but which vexes me because it leaves you no peace, and breathes mistrust and discouragement. Once and for all, open wide your soul to confidence; the Son of God is named *Jesus* only that He may win our love and trust.

A few days later he wrote again:

How good God is! Oh, live in peace and joy, breathing only the pure air of confidence. What can lessen your trust, since you are happy enough to be placed under the shadow of the Cross, and may well hope never to leave it?

CHAPTER IX

ACROSS FRANCE. 1806.

Love is the star by which our course we steer;
Love for our kind, its image glassed below;
And when the breeze of Hope begins to blow
The radiance spreads of that dilated sphere
O'er life's dark waters, nearer and more near.

* * * * * *

What then is Hope? A Faith that dares to move.
And what is Faith? The happy rest of Love.

AUBREY DE VERE.

THE history of the foundation of the convent of the Sacred Heart at Poitiers, and of the first two years of the noviceship there, was written in great detail by Mother Barat herself, in the form of a journal, from which some extracts will be given in this and the succeeding chapters.

I had long been hoping [she writes] that we might have a convent in Bordeaux. At last, the time seemed to have come. Fathers Lambert, Gloriot, and Thomas were invited to give a mission there, and the subject was discussed with them. I was told to be ready to set off, but there was some delay in the arrangement, and in the meantime Father Lambert wrote to Father Varin of a most suitable opening at Poitiers, where he was preaching. He wished that I should go there at once, before I went to Bordeaux. It seemed to be God's will, and in three days I had arranged every thing for leaving Sainte-Marie.

The journey was uneventful as far as Lyons, where two days were spent with the relations of Henriette Girard, whom Mother Barat had chosen as her travelling companion, because her age — she was forty — would, she hoped, make her a *porte-respect.*

Mother Barat wrote as follows to Mother Duchesne, of the day spent in Lyons :

I have a fresh proof to give you of the truth that God is good, and will Himself make up for the sacrifices He asks, and the persons whom He takes from us. You know in what state I left you. When I arrived in Lyons, the heat of the journey had made me even worse, and I was more ill than last year. I was away from my dear Good Samaritan, and felt as if no one could do any thing for me. I thought her as necessary for my body as she thinks me necessary for her soul. I ventured to make my complaint to our Blessed Lord, and represent to Him how difficult and trying this long journey would be, if I were so ill. After this, I made my mind easy. How could I fail to be certain that all would be well, when I remembered the previous tokens that God has vouchsafed to me of His love and protection ? Before I left Lyons, my illness had completely disappeared, without any remedies. I am quite cured.

I keep nothing from you, my dearest, but let this be for you and your Superior alone. I have so great a desire that you should love our Blessed Lord, that I do not think of self, and long to pass on into your soul the confidence and love I ought to have, that you may love Him for me. He shows me so many marks of His goodness, though I have, for so many years, so constantly resisted His grace, and been ungrateful. So do not you be discouraged about those faults against our good Master with which you justly reproach yourself. If my neglect of grace was all written down for you to read, you would say that you might indeed hope God loved you tenderly, since He does so much for one who is ever ungrateful. But enough about a person, who, if God visited her in His justice, ought no longer to exist, and who, if she were known as she is, would soon be forgotten by all. At least, pray for her, and think of her only to perform this act of charity.

The journal continues :

July 13th.—We took the coach for Moulins. Our fellow-travellers were well-meaning people in their way, but, though good-natured on the whole, they had some jokes at our expense. . . . Their company made me all the more thankful to God for having called us out of the world, and more resolved to show my gratitude by entire devotedness to His service. These thoughts were in my heart throughout our journey. When the coach stopped in the country hamlets, I catechised

the poor children, and found them in such dense ignorance that I longed to stay and teach them to know and love God.

July 14th.—At Moulins our road parted from that of our fellow-travellers, and we had to find another conveyance. We were kept waiting a whole day and more, till the post-boy, who had agreed to to take us with the mails, chose to set off. He was not anxious for our company, all the more because he had to give up his seat to us and be satisfied with an uncomfortable perch, and he only made up his mind to it at the last moment. We were at church early in the morning, but something told me I ought to go back to the inn, and as the feeling continued in spite of my efforts to rid myself of it, I went. At the door I met the post-boy. He had decided to take us, but, as we were not to be found, was on the point of setting off. My companion was deep in her prayers, and it was not easy to get her out of the church in time. At last we started. . . . The state of the country soon showed us what we had been spared by not going sooner, for during the night it had blown a real hurricane. At every turn we came upon uprooted trees and ruined crops. On that lonely road we should have been badly off indeed in such weather.

July 16th.— The post-boy, our only companion from Moulins to Limoges, was no common character. He belonged to a respectable family, and might well have chosen a less laborious calling than that of driving the mail-cart morning, noon, and night, but he liked nothing so well. He enjoyed any little variety in his monotonous days, and was delighted when his cart upset or ran into a ditch, or in winter into a heap of snow. He told us many such adventures with great glee. We tried to bring him to a frame of mind more suitable at his years, for he was quite sixty, and this for our own sakes as well as for his, for we had not the same liking for upsets. We put our trust in God, and nothing happened.

It was a splendid road, and we made the hundred and fifty posting miles between one town and the other at a stretch, stopping only at Montluçon, a pretty little town, and another time at Guéret. I had hoped to make a day's retreat during the journey, but our driver talked ceaselessly. Towards the end, however, he quieted down, and I might have enjoyed some silence had not my companion very often interrupted it with questions as to how I felt, or to tell me it was time to take some food, or to ask me to say something for the good of her soul. Another cause of distraction was that when our driver became drowsy he swayed from side to side on his insecure seat, and I was so much afraid he would fall that I was always on the watch to catch him.

July 17th.—At last we arrived at Limoges about eight o'clock in the evening. Our first step was to call on a canon of the cathedral, to whom Father Lambert had written begging him to find us a conveyance to go on to Poitiers. We found him at the Bishop's house, but as it was then late, and he could not at that time get us a carriage, he told us to come again the next morning. We had hardly got back to the inn, when a driver who had heard of our need, came to offer to take us. The canon, who knew him, answered for him, and we made our bargain. For a reasonable sum we were to reach Poitiers on the fourth day after leaving Limoges, and above all, we were to be able to hear Mass the next day, Sunday, at Bellac, about ten o'clock in the morning. I had not seen the carriage, but did not doubt that it was a suitable conveyance, as they proposed taking us in it. Great was my surprise when it turned out to be a waggon laden with goods. The driver had arranged in front a little awning of canvas stretched over some hoops. Our parcels and some hay, formed the seat. I understood that God had allowed it all to give me the opportunity of practising humility and holy poverty, and to make me like our Lord, and I was very glad that we should make our entrance into Poitiers in this guise; it was a good omen for the success of our journey. My companion did not resign herself very easily, and for her sake it was only outside the town that we got into our fine coach. Getting in, or rather getting up, was a somewhat difficult process, and we had much trouble in scrambling into our seats. Our driver, whose name was Cadence, had a second waggon in charge of his servant Jacques; both went at foot's pace, and our first halt was at ten o'clock in the evening. We had only gone nine miles. The inn was a very poor one, and a large muster of rats was held in our room during the night. The house was so lonely that we should have been much frightened, if we had not placed all our confidence in God, who had so visibly protected us hitherto.

July 19th.—We rose very early, meaning to set off in good time to reach Bellac for Mass, but our drivers were in no hurry, and we had long to wait. . . . Three hours after we had started, we asked if we were near Bellac. Cadence said very quietly we were a long way off yet, and certainly should not be there by ten. I was much grieved at this, and begged our Lord very earnestly not to let this day—consecrated to His service—go by without our having heard Mass.

Soon a village came in sight, and it was a great relief to find that there was a church, still more to hear the bells begin to ring for Mass. It really seemed as if they had waited for our arrival. I could not

doubt that this favour was an answer to our prayers. This time I asked no leave of Cadence, but simply told him to stop. He offered no opposition, glad to make up in this way for having broken his word by not getting to Bellac in time. . . . We reached Bellac only at one o'clock. We went to the church, and found the Blessed Sacrament exposed, and the priest with a numerous congregation in adoration, singing hymns very devoutly. We stayed as long as possible with them, and then went back to the inn. We found our drivers at dinner, and I asked that something of what they left might be put up for us. We always did this, glad of the opportunity of practising poverty better than we could have done had we been travelling in the ordinary way. At last we set off again, and went on to Poitiers at the slow pace of twenty-one miles a day. Still we were free to do what we liked: we could sing, read, pray, meditate, &c. Whenever we stopped, I spoke of God to the country people we came across, and inquired whether their children were receiving instruction in their religion. It was very sad to find their ignorance so great everywhere, while we could do nothing for them. I grieved not to be able to stay and teach them, but I tried at least to give them the wish to know and love God, and I promised them to do all I could to provide school-mistresses.

Cadence told us on the evening of our third day's journey, when we were a few miles from Poitiers, that the waggon must be repaired before it could go further, or it would break down. He said that we should still reach Poitiers before nightfall the next day. I was not sorry to spend the morning where we were. I thought our Lord had allowed it, to give me the opportunity of keeping the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, my patroness, by going to the sacraments, a grace of which we had been deprived since we left Lyons. . . . Early next morning, we went to confession, and received Holy Communion. I could not thank God enough for granting me this happiness on such a day, and must say that I enjoyed exceedingly keeping this feast so quietly, and far away from the usual congratulations, visits, &c. My companion had to do all the honours. We breakfasted out of doors, on the grass, and when I was not looking, she made me a nosegay of wild flowers, and then offered them to me in the name of our little Society; and expressed her good wishes in two verses of poetry which she had just composed.*

The repairs took more than four hours. Cadence, who was perhaps afraid to come and tell us so himself, set off for Poitiers with

* Mother Barat often said in after years what a pleasant memory this feast of St. Mary Magdalen was to look back upon.

the other waggon, leaving Jacques to break the news to us, and drive us on next day. The hours went quickly by; we rested, walked in the fields, and paid many visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and thus the time passed quickly enough.

July 23rd.— The next day we were up as soon as it was light. For the first time since we left Grenoble it was raining, just on the day of days on which I was to arrive at Poitiers. However, there was no fear that there were any preparations for my reception which the rain would spoil! We had only fifteen miles to go, so that there was every hope we should get there in good time, in spite of the rest Jacques took at mid-day. . . .

The rain grew heavier as the day wore on, so that in spite of our awning we got pretty well drenched. The country through which we passed looked desolate enough, and even about six miles from the town there was nothing to show we were getting near it. At last it came in sight.

I had intended to get down before we arrived at Poitiers, and accept the invitation which Cadence had given us to go to his house, and allow his wife to accompany us to our destination. There we might have changed some of our things, for we were wet through, and our clothes much the worse for so many days in the open air. However, the rain made this impossible, and there was nothing for it but to drive into Poitiers in our waggon, as we were. As a shelter both from rain and from the gaze of passers-by, we had put up a curtain, as well as we could, but it was too low, and our heads were quite visible over it to any one whom the noise of our heavy wheels brought to the first-floor windows of the streets through which we passed.

After taking us a long round, our driver stopped in a large court-yard where he had to unload his waggon, and where we also had to get down. We were some considerable distance from the house, and no one, of course, had come to meet us, for they did not know of our arrival. I had to go and introduce myself, but I had no idea which direction to take. Something must be done, we could not stay where we were. I met a good woman who agreed to help us to carry our parcels, and to show us the way. It was still raining, and this put the finishing touch to our appearance.

Their destination was an old building on the outskirts of the town, well-known in the history of Poitiers and the neighbourhood, as the abbey of the Feuillants. Mother Barat knew little more of it than its name, when on the evening of

July 23rd, in a plight in which, as she said, "there was certainly no room for vanity," she humbly rang the bell. The door flew open by a wire pulled from a distance, and she saw an old servant, who made no movement to receive the visitors.

I inquired for her mistress [the journal continues]; she said she would go and look for her, and showed us into a large room. The immense building seemed nearly deserted, and a deep silence reigned everywhere, that seemed to tell of the calm and peace of the souls of those who lived in it. We were left alone for some time, and I had leisure for reflection. An overpowering sense of my weakness seized me at the thought that I had come to govern the house, but I relied solely on God's help.

Mother Barat knew little more of the ladies who lived in this large building than she did of the house itself, and a few words of explanation will be necessary. Three sisters named Chobelet had, in the early days of the Revolution, come into Poitiers from the country, not so much for shelter and safety as to devote themselves in any way they could in helping to maintain religion. All through the Reign of Terror, they had been brave enough to teach a school where faith was instilled into the hearts of children, and although they eventually incurred the penalty of imprisonment, and nearly forfeited their lives, when better days dawned they re-opened their school and again set about their good works. The old abbey of the Feuillants, built in the reign of Louis XIII. for a reform of Cistercian monks, had been sacked during the Terror, its church destroyed, and much of the monastery left in ruins. When peace was restored, it was offered for sale, and these ladies bought the portion which was still standing, with the view of establishing there a community and school. They were joined by others, and the work was begun. By degrees, however, the associates dropped off, until only one of the original proprietors, Lydia Chobelet, remained at the Feuillants with a single companion, Josephine Bigeu. Fitted as they were by education, character, and experience to teach and train children, these ladies could not carry on their work alone. Moreover, they both wished to join a religious Order, so as to

devote themselves more perfectly to God's service. They resolved to dispose of their house, and found a ready purchaser in the Bishop, who wanted a house for a seminary. The deed of sale had in fact been signed when Father Lambert came to preach in Poitiers, and made the acquaintance of Mdlle Chobelet and her friend. He was much distressed at finding a work which promised well, and was so much needed, about to be abandoned, and earnestly dissuaded them from carrying out their idea. He told them about the Society of the Sacred Heart, and they had no difficulty in falling in with his suggestion that they should join it. Father Lambert then wrote to Father Varin, as we have seen, having first prevailed upon the Bishop to allow the deed of sale to be cancelled.

To return to our story. When Mothers Barat and Girard had been waiting for some time in the large bare room, the ladies made their appearance.

My companion presented me to them [Mother Barat continues], for I could not introduce myself, and this was all the assurance I could give them that I was indeed the person they expected. They received me politely, as one for whose arrival they had not had time to grow impatient, for I had set off at once. They gave us dinner, and sent word to Father Lambert, who came without delay. During this first visit his conversation turned on God's goodness to them in having provided, just at the moment when they were giving up their school, the means for continuing their work by joining our Society.

Great tact was required on Mother Barat's part during the next few days, as she was placed in a very difficult position. There were plenty of people to tell the two ladies that they were very foolish in giving up their liberty to a stranger, when they could continue to do good on their own account. There was much cautious inquiry on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities of the place, as to the credentials, scope, &c., of the Society; there were difficulties of many kinds within and without, but all yielded to the action of God's spirit, whose docile instrument Mother Barat was. She said little, and prayed much. The Rules and Statutes of the Society were submitted to the Bishop, and the Vicar General called upon

her to make further inquiries. He left, expressing himself fully satisfied with her answers. The approbation she had asked for was granted, and the Bishop was anxious she should at once begin a work calculated to effect so much good.

A few days after Mother Barat's arrival at Poitiers, several postulants applied for admission to the noviceship. She saw them, and encouraged those who seemed to have vocations, but admitted none at that time. In fact, the Poitiers noviceship was to be recruited chiefly from Bordeaux, whither it was necessary for Mother Barat to go early in August.

Father Enfantin, one of the Fathers of the Faith, had been preaching there, and his words had aroused, in many, the desire of devoting their lives wholly to God. He was most anxious that a convent should be founded at once at Bordeaux, while Father Lambert, on the contrary, preferred that the postulants from Bordeaux should come to Poitiers.

Mother Barat, taking the same companion as before, left Poitiers with Father Lambert, on August 10th, and arrived on the 12th. She was received with the utmost warmth by the postulants who wished to join the Society, six of whom had, for the last three months, been living together under a rule given them by Father Enfantin. After a day's discussion it was arranged between the two Fathers that the noviceship should be at Poitiers. Mother Barat called on the Archbishop and promised him that she would return, and, in the meantime, endeavour to become worthy to live under his authority.

He gave us his blessing [she says], with fatherly affection, and treated us with the greatest kindness. The veneration with which this holy Archbishop inspired me, made me doubly sorry to be forced by circumstances to give up the idea of working under him, and more anxious than ever to realize it in God's good time.

During my short stay in Bordeaux all those who, under Father Enfantin's direction, wished to consecrate themselves to God, came to beg me to admit them into the Society. The number increased daily, until I had not a minute's rest. A few even came again to tell me that, to their sorrow, they could not obtain their parents' consent, so I had to encourage and exhort them to correspond loyally with God's grace by entire fidelity, whilst waiting patiently for the time

when it would be possible for them to be received. I could not take all back with me, for they were over thirty in number, so the six who had been living together under a rule, and whose case was most urgent, with two others, were received at once. I arranged to send them in separate parties, to avoid the remarks that would have been made at the simultaneous departure of so many. . . . Four went with Mother Henriette Girard, three followed by themselves, and I kept one, Elizabeth (called in religion Thérèse) Maillucheau, to go with me.

On August 30th, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Duchesne:

I went a few days ago to see off my companions, who are starting for Poitiers, and when they embarked on the Garonne, I stayed on the quay looking after them, and also at the many ships that were at anchor there. After awhile my Sisters of Bordeaux faded from my thoughts, and in their stead I saw you and myself together there, ready to start for the goal of our hopes, in one of these ships. How I wish you could have shared with me the sight of that beautiful harbour, which these thoughts have endeared to me.

It was from this very port that Mother Duchesne embarked eleven years later for Louisiana. Before leaving Bordeaux Mother Barat went for a few days to a country place in the neighbourhood called St. André de Cubzac, where Elizabeth Maillucheau's parents spent the summer months, and where the families of four of the other postulants also lived.

My intention in making this halt [the journal says], was to see all the parents, and reassure them as to their daughters' fate . . . and our little visit did good. We took the coach from thence to Poitiers, and nothing remarkable happened on the way. One little accident befell me. Getting out in the dark I hurt my foot, so that when I arrived at Poitiers I could not walk. The coach stops a long way from our house, and there is no carriage to be had in the whole town. Fortunately our excellent friend Madame de Charpagne, who lives close by, was on the look-out for me, as she had been also for those who came on previous days. I went to her, and she bandaged my foot so as to make it possible for me to walk to the Feuillants. It was a joy for us all to meet again, and they were beginning to be anxious at my delay.

I found that the journeys had been made without mischance, and that all those lately arrived had settled down in their new quarters.

CHAPTER X

NOVICESHIP AT POITIERS. 1806–1808.

> Oh, place Thou
> My heart beyond the world's sad vibrating,
> And where but in Thyself? Oh, circle me,
> That I may feel no touches save of Thee.
>
> TOWNSHEND.

FOR nearly two years after her return to Poitiers, Mother Barat's work was, with rare exceptions, within the walls of the old abbey of the Feuillants. Her time, her thoughts, her prayers, were directed to the task of forming her novices to the spiritual life, and to the duties of the Society.

St. Augustine tells us that, the whole labour of virtue is in humility, and the reward of humility is charity. If we labour in the first, God will bring us to the last. And the work of the spiritual life of the soul, of which a noviceship lays the foundations, could not be better expressed in a few words than in this sentence from St. Lawrence Justinian:* "When humility shall have filled, brought down, and melted the soul, then shall she begin to be enlarged and raised in spirit, irradiated with truth, and filled with light."

But, while Mother Barat was engaged in training her novices, a wonderful work was going on in her own soul. Mother Thérèse Maillucheau ventured to say that what his sojourn in the cave at Manresa was to St. Ignatius, such, in a certain way, were the months which Mother Barat spent at Poitiers to her future life and work. "There the Society, still so little at that time, was formed within her heart. God loved the innocence and uprightness of her soul. He unveiled to

* Quoted by Bishop Ullathorne in *The Groundwork of the Christian Virtues*, p. 369.

her some of the secrets of what the future had in store, and prepared her by gifts of grace and strength for its many trials and labours."

The abbey had been built for prayer, and every thing about it favoured Mother Barat's love of solitude and retirement. It lies outside Poitiers, at the edge of the little eminence on which the town stands, and is a massive pile of buildings of one storey in height. Thick pillars support the vaulted ceilings of the rooms on the ground-floor, one of the largest of which was used as a chapel after the Revolution, to replace the church which had been destroyed. On the south side of the house, opposite to the entrance-door, a quadrangular stone cloister of great width forms an inner enclosure. It overlooks the large terraced gardens which lie on the slope of the hill, at whose foot the river Clain winds its way, between the rows of poplar-trees that fringe its banks. The singing of the birds that build their nests in the old walnut and other trees that grow in the abbey garden, and the clicking of the mill-wheels turned by the flowing stream, are the only sounds that break the stillness from without.

It was on Saturday [Mother Barat writes in her journal] that I came home. The next day but one was the feast of the Nativity of our Blessed Lady, and, as all were most eager to begin their noviceship, I fixed that day for the opening. I spoke to them on the eve, of the dispositions in which they should enter upon it, dwelling especially on *generosity*, *courage*, and *joy*.

No ceremony was customary at that time for taking the habit, and the next day eleven postulants put on the religious dress worn by their Sisters at Amiens and Grenoble. Father Gloriot, who was passing through Poitiers, came to say Mass, and afterwards, having assembled the new novices, he gave them an exhortation. He placed a high standard before them, telling them that they were called to be *saints* and *great saints*, but that they would never become so if they did not learn to *be humble*, to *love*, and to *suffer*.

Two days later, Mother Barat gave each one her share of the work of the house, and "they received their employments,"

she says, "as coming from the Hand of God." She made Josephine Bigeu, mistress of novices, under herself, and head mistress of the school.

She is one of those perfect souls [the journal says] in whom there is nothing to reprove. There is no deviation in her from one straight line of conduct: *the good pleasure of God.* Her fidelity never lets slip any opportunity, great or small, of making some sacrifice, and that without allowing any thing to appear, with a smile upon her lips, and an outward serenity that nothing seems able to ruffle, though inwardly she feels keenly. She takes the utmost care to repress any thing that is merely natural. I look on her as a saint, and have the greatest confidence in her. She is very highly gifted, both spiritually and mentally, and has the rare talent of uniting firmness and gentleness, which wins her the respect and love of the children.

Lydia Chobelet was infirmarian, and was put in charge of the temporal concerns of the house. Thérèse Maillucheau was sacristan, and Henriette Girard taught the classes. As there were for some time only five children in the school, this was not hard work. The minor employments, such as time-keeper, portress, mistress of needlework, &c., were also allotted. "All set about their work," Mother Barat says, "with great zeal and exactitude, and very soon the most perfect order pervaded the house."

Although retreats were given each year by Fathers of the Faith, and from time to time exhortations, which Mother Barat prized most highly, by the canons and other priests of the town of Poitiers, the burden of the formation of the novices fell on her, and on her alone. They received instructions from her twice a week, on the Rules, the exercises of religious life, and the feasts of the Church, and access to her in private was always made easy to them.

When the feast of St. Teresa came, she reminded them, as Father Gloriot had done, that they must be saints if they were to work fruitfully for the salvation of souls. "If we are faithful," she said, "our Lord will give us the same graces He gave St. Teresa and her companions, and will take delight in us as He did in them. Let us clearly understand, God means

us to do great things ; why otherwise should He have worked what we may almost call miracles to bring us together in this holy house ?"

The novices soon learnt what some of these "miracles" were to which Mother Barat referred, for she liked them during their recreation hours to relate those events of their life that best showed forth God's merciful goodness towards them.

The time always seemed too short [she says in her journal] ; sometimes they would entreat that it might be lengthened because the most interesting part of the story was just reached. I gave in now and then, but generally the stroke of the clock interrupted the thread of the narrative.

Mother Thérèse Maillucheau, in her recollections of the noviceship, adds that as the stories grew longer and longer until they threatened to become interminable, especially in the evenings, Mother Barat at last measured off, with a pin stuck into a lighted candle, the time allowed to each speaker. When the candle had burnt down to the pin she had to stop. No wonder these stories were fascinating, for besides the common grounds of interest never wanting in the history of vocations, these first companions of Mother Barat had all seen more or less of the Revolution, and some had passed through its dangers. They had all at least experienced the inestimable value of the devotion to the Sacred Heart in keeping up the courage of the Catholics throughout that disastrous time.*

It was not without long efforts that Josephine Bigeu, who at that time was about thirty, had attained the perfection Mother Barat delighted to find in her. From the time she was fourteen till she joined Lydia Chobelet at the Feuillants, she had lived a life of voluntary austerity in her father's house at Poitiers. A room was set apart for her, where she spent long hours in study, but especially in prayer. Once during the Reign of Terror her mother found her there in floods of tears, kneeling before her crucifix. "I must confess my sins to God since I can no longer confess them to a priest," was all

* See *Devotion to the Heart of Jesus*, by Father Dalgairns, p. 44.

she could say in explanation of her grief. "She had the face of an angel," we are told, "and seemed never to have sinned in Adam."

By her side as we think of these Poitiers novices comes Thérèse Mailhucheau, whose recollections supplement Mother Barat's journal, and tell us much that the humility of the latter led her to omit. She had been the leading spirit in the movement towards a life of perfection which had brought so many into the Society of the Sacred Heart, and throughout the Revolution had given proof of intense devotion to the cause of the Church. She was twenty-nine when the Fathers of the Faith came to preach at Bordeaux. Her vocation, kept secret on account of the opposition of her parents, now overpowered all resistance, and she with six others formed the little community which Mother Barat received into the Society. We are told that her simplicity was the characteristic which most struck those who saw her for the first time. She was well-educated and had gifts for music and poetry, but earth and the things of earth were not her sphere, and she had no talent for dealing with them. It might be more justly said of her than of many others, though it holds good for all, that the true life of the soul is not in ourselves but in God. The practical matters of life seemed alien to her nature, but she had marvellous aptitudes for the things of God. When the conversation was on spiritual subjects her soul seemed to awake, and the secret of the transformation then effected in her was her intense love for our Lord. In her, contemplation always predominated over action. Her part was that of Mary not of Martha. Mother Barat wrote of her: "She loves our Lord with extreme ardour, and is very humble, very straightforward, and very simple. She follows in St. Teresa's footsteps, and what can I say more?"

But Suzanne Geoffroy, who joined the noviceship in 1807, had a story to tell that far exceeded the others in interest. She was nearly twenty years older than Mother Barat, and at the time the Revolution burst upon France was only waiting for an opportunity to enter religion. When the churches were

closed and religious orders suppressed, she and three of her friends formed a community which, during the Reign of Terror, was devoted to the task of helping by every possible means, and at the cost of any suffering, to maintain religion in Poitiers, and assist the persecuted priests and religious.* Her great object in life was to establish a Society following the Rule of St. Ignatius, which should be devoted to the Sacred Heart and to the salvation of souls. In spite of failure, calumny, and persecution, she never lost hope and confidence. As soon as she heard of Mother Barat she wished to join her, but prudence made it necessary to defer an admisson that would have raised much opposition at the time.

Mother Barat's tact, and the humility and patience of Suzanne Geoffroy smoothed all difficulties, and on the feast of St. Teresa, 1807, she entered. Mother Barat writes : " Though she was forty-four years of age, and had been Superior for fourteen years, she fulfilled all her duties as a novice with the most exemplary humility and obedience. During her noviceship she enjoyed an inexpressible peace and happiness, and greatly edified her Sisters by the practice of every virtue, and the most punctual observance of Rule."

Another novice, Sister Chastaignier, was of a very different stamp. She was of a very active nature, and was well-known in Poitiers for her charity to the poor, to prisoners, and to children. She had had no previous training in spiritual life, and the noviceship was a series of surprises to her. The result was often a great source of amusement at recreation, to others as well as to herself, for she was as open as the day, and made no secret of her mistakes.

In summer, the recreations were often spent under the shade of one of the old walnut-trees in the garden. There the novices sang to Mother Barat the hymns she loved, while Sister Thérèse Maillucheau accompanied the voices on her harp. There they learnt from her how to speak of God and the things of God.

* This was the origin of the Society of Picpus. For details of the life of Suzanne Geoffroy see : *Good Deeds, Sketches of holy and devoted lives.* Part I.

There was no constraint [Mother Maillucheau writes], in Mother Barat's action upon souls. She never made the weight of her authority felt. Her persuasive and energetic words gave us a horror of the smallest faults, a look or gesture imprinted in our hearts a love for what is good. She liked our recreations to be always interesting, and wished that every one should contribute her share towards making them so; but at other times perfect silence was to be kept, perfect stillness to reign in the house. Any unwonted noise brought her to the spot. "You ought to live like angels in the house of God," she used to say to us. "You must love deeply, suffer, and be silent." This described her own life. The serenity and gentleness of her manner won our hearts. She was indeed an image of our Lord for us; to watch her and behold her virtues drew us irresistibly to Him.

Thirty years afterwards when Mother Barat was once speaking of silence and its necessity, her thoughts carried her back to Poitiers. "I have spoken to you of that foundation," she said. "You know those who came there first were not yet religious. They were very good people, but they had no idea of religious life. They were accustomed to do as they liked, and enjoy themselves (very innocently no doubt). But they learnt to keep silence perfectly, and by fidelity to this practice they became souls of prayer and really holy. Several of them have been gathered in by death, others are now pillars of the Society."

Her desire, I might almost say, her passion [Mother Thérèse continues], was to lead us to union with our Lord, and the way she took to bring this about was first to separate us from ourselves. For this purpose she made our life in the noviceship one of hard work, and work which we should once have looked on as menial; but she gave it to us to do in the most matter of fact way, as if we had been used to it always. Several inferred from this that they were fit for nothing else, and that they were meant to be lay-sisters. But this did not trouble them. Besides, she set us the example by taking for her own share whatever was roughest in the work, and we often saw her sweeping, carrying furniture, beds, and even stones, for this immense house was in need of every thing to make it habitable. Every now and then our patience was tested as well as our obedience. Thus one day when the walnut-trees had been beaten, she sent a novice to gather in the walnuts that were lying on the ground. Late on in the evening

she was still at work, when fortunately, she was missed, and sent for. She would not have ventured to leave without having finished her task. In our dark days, and what novice is without them now and then, her strength and energy put new life into us.

Poverty added its share to the wholesome austerity of these early days. It was some time before the school grew in numbers. Sister Chobelet's resources soon came to an end, and the postulants brought little or nothing. Marie, an old servant of the house, was very ingenious in her marketing, but even she could scarcely make both ends meet. Sister Chastaignier grew very tired of the continual patching and darning of old clothes that fell to her lot, and was inclined to think she had made a mistake in leaving her active charities, "where at least there were some useful results to show for her labour." However, her love for God quickly overcame the temptation. In these trials, as Mother Maillucheau says, "Mother Barat bore her burden of anxiety with unfailing calm and patience; looking for help only from above, and indeed she possessed the treasures of Heaven in her heart. How often it happened that when provisions were required there was not a farthing in the house, but God saw to it. Thus the religious were in peace, whatever happened; we were never the worse."

Trials from without were not wanting, and the new Order was supposed to be prejudicial to some Institutions already existing in Poitiers. "Who would ever have thought," Mother Barat says, "that a few poor women who spent their time in sweeping, stitching, teaching elementary grammar, and spelling over the Latin of their Office, could give such umbrage to any one?"

St. Francis of Sales tells us that "willingness to suffer is a certain proof of love," and Mother Barat's novices would have been quite unworthy of her care, had they not learnt from her that "the Cross is earth's, one treasure." "The Spouse of a crucified God ought to suffer," she said to them. "St. Paul tells us: 'It was fitting that Christ should suffer and thus enter into His glory.' Can we go by another path? No, Sisters,

He is our Leader: the only way to Heaven for us is the same road as that He trod."

Practices of mortification, penance, and humility were in full vigour in the Poitiers noviceship. Thus one day a novice, who was drawing water from a well, fainted, because, it turned out, she was wearing an iron girdle which pierced her flesh deeply. The oldest clothes were the ones most highly prized and sought for, and especially by those who in the world had been most particular as to their appearance.

Mother Barat was clever in pursuing self-love to its last entrenchments, as Mother Thérèse herself often found. For she is speaking of herself when she tells us how one who had great love for prayer was, contrary to all her inclinations, employed in waxing floors, looking after the cows and cleaning the house. Once she was before the Blessed Sacrament and so absorbed as not to hear the clock strike at the time for a community exercise. "By whose leave," Mother Barat inquired, when she came in late, "did you prolong your visit in the church? I do not acknowledge any one for my daughter who prefers her own will to the Rule. For three days you must not call me Mother."

"On one occasion," Mother Barat relates," I went into the chapel to look for Sister Thérèse, who was there, lost in her devotions. I called her, but she did not hear me; I spoke again. 'You are wanted in the garden,' I said, 'to cut some grass for the cows.' She looked at me as if only half understanding my words. 'To cut grass,' she repeated, and as I made an affirmative sign she rose quickly and went. After a time she returned. 'Reverend Mother, I have cut a good deal. May I go back to the chapel?' 'No, cut as much again.' She obeyed, and came presently to tell me she had finished her task. I gave her some other errand, and she went off instantly without showing the slightest shade of disappointment."

In March, 1807, Mother Barat made a retreat, and before it was over she gave her novices an instruction on the meaning and scope of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. "I finished

what I was saying," she adds, "by asking them to let me kiss their feet. They made some difficulty in yielding, but when I said that I should know whose affection for me was genuine by their doing as I wished, the greater number gave in."

Of this retreat, and others like it, Mother Thérèse writes: "In the little oratory dedicated to St. Joseph, alone with our Lord for a whole fortnight, our Mother spent her days in loving converse with God. She saw no one during that time except the Sister who brought her food, and who was forbidden to speak to her. She came back to the house for the night. We only saw her in the chapel at the evening Office, almost hidden behind the altar. Early in the morning she was there also, deep in prayer. How had the night been spent? She took every precaution to conceal her penances, but many things betrayed her secret. There was about her something of our Lord which went straight to our souls. We felt we had a saint amongst us."

In July, she again spent some days in solitude.

I wished to make a little retreat [she writes], to have time for recollection as well as leisure and quiet to write a great many letters: for usually I had not a moment for this kind of work, and my correspondence had fallen into arrears. I told my Sisters, in a conference, what I intended to do, and they did not mind letting me have the few days I asked them for. But once in retreat I remained six days. I had retired to a little oratory (St. Joseph's) at the bottom of the garden, where I could be quiet and alone. During the day, the novices were considerate enough to keep at a distance in their walks, but in the evening they came prowling round my solitude, and as one or another always had a little word to say, I had some ado to get rid of them. At last I was obliged to leave my delightful retreat, and resume my active occupations.

In my instruction of the following day I told them that I had been busier about their affairs than my own, during the time I had been away from them. If I had done as I wished, I should have been solely occupied with the eternal truths, but that instead I had been writing letters which, had they been left till later, would have prevented me from giving my time to the novices. So do not be vexed with me, I added, since it was for your own good I left you. And now we will begin again to follow our common life.

The first Holy Week was a time of redoubled recollection. On the Wednesday, Mother Barat's occupations throughout the day prevented her from speaking to the novices, but her journal tells us, that late in the evening after night prayers she gave her conference.

I spoke to them [she says] of the infinite love of our Blessed Lord in instituting this Divine Eucharist, and on the loving, tender words He spoke to His Apostles during the Last Supper. How, I asked, can we help loving Him, who has given us such unheard of marks of love? It was to us as well as to His Apostles that He said: *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you*, that is, to give Myself to you as your food. Yes, the Jews are about to put Me to death. I must leave you, but My love cannot brook the separation. I shall institute this Divine Sacrament, and thus remain always with you, and with those who will come after you to the end of time. Oh, Sisters, shall we still be unmoved? Shall we still refuse Him anything? Can we keep any thing back? It would be monstrous ingratitude!

Time passed quickly, while I was speaking on so engrossing a subject. It was ten o'clock, and I told them it was time to go, though they were ready to stay all night. However, duty prevailed, but before separating we gave one another the kiss of peace. This is customary with us on the eve of great feasts, and especially as a preparation for our Easter Communion. Then each one asks pardon of the others for any little pain she may have occasioned, and our union becomes all the stronger.

Maundy Thursday was passed in recollection, and we spent before the Blessed Sacrament part of the day, as well as the whole night; that is, we divided the night-hours amongst us; no one was there all the time. Good Friday also was spent in retreat. Towards evening, Monsieur de Beauregard came to preach the Passion to us. The music of the Mass on Easter Sunday was sung solemnly by our Sisters. At Benediction we sang all the hymns of the festival, and the Blessed Sacrament was exposed all day.

In Easter week, Mother Barat left Poitiers for Paris, to consult Father Varin about matters relating to the Society, and she left Mother Thérèse Maillucheau in charge. A foundation had been asked for at Joigny, and Mother Barat writes thus about it in her journal:

One of my reasons against it, was that Joigny is my native place, and I did not wish to put myself where I should inevitably have intercourse with my family, as I have long since made a sacrifice to God of all natural ties, and am most anxious to keep from Him no part of my heart, which is made only for Him. Moreover, my relations, who are very fond of me, have to renew their sacrifice each time I leave them. I also suffer from it in some degree. Hence I have always said that Joigny would be the last place in which I should found a convent.

She left the decision to Father Varin, who was not in favour of the scheme.

On Friday before Whit-Sunday I came back [she continues], a day sooner than was expected. I went at once to the chapel to thank God for my safe return, and all followed me eagerly. When I was on my knees, Mother Thérèse entoned the *Te Deum* which all the rest took up. I rose quickly to silence them, but it was not possible, and I had to bear it to the end.

We afterwards went into the garden, and stayed out rather late enjoying the fresh air. We spent the time in rejoicing at being together again, and in saying how good God is! The Sisters had composed some songs in my honour, which they sang by the light of the moon. As these contained a great deal about their love for our Lord I forgave them, and even enjoyed listening to them. I saw with my own eyes that all was going well in the house as I had been told it was, that the Rule was kept and charity reigned everywhere.

I had written from Paris to tell them that the Rule of our Society, which had been sent in March to the Emperor for approbation, had just been returned to us approved by him, a fresh token of God's goodness to us, which we must acknowledge by a greater fidelity.

The decree of approbation of the Society, under the title of *Dames* or *Sœurs de l'Instruction Chrétienne*, was signed by Napoleon on March 10th, 1807, at the camp of Osterode in Prussia. "I did not know," Mother Barat wrote, "if it would be expedient for the glory of God that we should have this approbation. If it made us less humble and therefore less pleasing to our Lord,we had better remain little and forgotten."

The feast of the Sacred Heart soon followed. "At eleven o'clock," Mother Barat writes, "I went to the little oratory

called St. Joseph's (which I had had decorated for the purpose) with three of my Sisters, Thérèse Maillucheau, Josephine Bigeu, and Henriette Girard. These alone had made their vows, and the two former had done so unknown to their Sisters, so I did not wish the renewal to be made in their presence."

After a few simple words to prepare them for the act of renovation, she adds: "I then renewed my vows. Mother Thérèse began hers, but she was so much overcome that she could not finish, and I was obliged to make her begin again a few moments later. Our two other Sisters followed, and did it with all their hearts."

In November a mission was preached in Poitiers by Fathers Gloriot and Enfantin, and Mother Barat was rejoicing in the good effected, when a terrible blow fell upon their hopes. The Society of the Fathers of the Faith was dispersed on a suspicion of royalist tendencies, by a decree from the Emperor. They were ordered to return to their respective dioceses, and Napoleon said to Cardinal Fesch that if his command was not obeyed within a fortnight, he would send them to Cayenne. The sad news reached Mother Barat in a letter from Father Varin, and she herself had to break it to Fathers Gloriot and Enfantin. Their fortitude and resignation were a great encouragement and consolation to her. It was too clear that the suppression of her Society might follow, and it was necessary to inform those who were finishing their noviceship of the state of the case. They stood firm however, and on the feast of the Presentation of our Blessed Lady, Lydia Chobelet and others made their vows.

In April, 1808, Mother Barat, who foresaw the time was at hand for her to leave Poitiers, sent for Mother Henriette Grosier from Grenoble, where she had been since the house at Belley was suppressed. Her travelling companion was Emilie Giraud. Mother Barat writes: "I received this old companion of my first years in the Society with great joy after so long a separation, for it is our greatest pleasure to meet again, when the will of God allows it. It was also very pleasant to see 'my little Emilie.'"

Mother Barat often spoke to the novices of the probability of her having to leave them, but, in spite of her efforts to prepare the way, the news of her departure came as a great blow.

"I told them in May," she says, "that I was going to Niort, but they were quite unprepared when I announced that Mother Grosier was to succeed me as Superior. She fell on her knees in tears, imploring me not to overwhelm her with this burden. I had to disregard her protestations, but I spent part of the evening in strengthening and comforting her. . . . After that I began my retreat."

In June, 1808, Mother Barat left for Niort with Suzanne Geoffroy, who was to be Superior of a house there, and with Madame Bernard, one of the Poitiers novices who came from that town; her special mission in the Poitiers noviceship was at an end.

CHAPTER XI

NIORT. AMIENS. GRENOBLE. 1808–1809.

Night brings out stars, as sorrows show us truths. — BAILEY.

THE busy little town of Niort, about fifty miles from Poitiers, had grown up gradually round a strongly fortified castle, built by the English in the twelfth century, on a hill overlooking the river Sèvres. Two massive and square towers, the dungeons of the stronghold, still remain upon the hill on which lies the upper part of the town. Above the lower town, built in the valley, rises the beautiful Gothic church of Notre-Dame, over whose northern doorway is a balustrade forming the words: *Mater Dei, memento mei.*

It was evening when Mother Barat and her companions reached their destination. On entering Niort, they passed two large houses, and the Vicar General from Poitiers, who was of the party, pointed them out to Mother Geoffroy, saying as a joke: "Those houses would be just what you want." "You would be very much surprised," was her answer, "if one day they were ours." Nothing seemed less likely then, and yet this came to pass in course of time.

The nuns were kindly received by Madame Bernard's sisters, and they spent the next two days in looking for a house. Although their coming had been so often asked for, no one now seemed much disposed to help them in their search, or, indeed, to be at all anxious that they should settle in the town. The religious whom the Revolution had deprived of their means of support, were maintained at the public expense, and the general opinion at that time in Niort among

the well-to-do people was that they had quite enough nuns to look after.

As nothing better was to be had, Mother Barat took a little house in a blind alley. The rooms were dark, bare, and dilapidated, the garden very small, and enclosed by high walls which shut out the view. Two postulants joined them at once, and all set to work to put the house in order, and prepare for the first Mass, which was said on July 1st, by the Vicar General from Poitiers. The Blessed Sacrament was then reserved in a poor tabernacle, placed on a table between two wooden candlesticks and a few flowers.

A poor school was opened at once, and sixty children were taught there from the first. The boarding school was formed more slowly, and, for several months, consisted of only three children. Mother Barat sent for Mother Emilie Giraud, from Poitiers, and then, after a day or two, left the little foundation, to return thither. A time of trial followed for the house at Niort, a long struggle against poverty, disappointments, and isolation. Mother Geoffroy was inured to suffering, and bore all without losing heart, but Mother Emilie Giraud found it very hard. Mother Barat's letters to her were the gleams of sunshine that gave fresh life to her soul, and trained her, by degrees, to find her happiness where alone it could be lasting. With all the impulsiveness of her nature, she responded to the teaching she received, and sometimes even earned, from Mother Geoffroy's good sense, a warning "not to spin her threads too fine, but to be satisfied with thicker strands that would make good stout linen for rough work."

As time passed, and the expected pupils did not make their appearance, whilst other convents needed reinforcements, Mother Barat at last reluctantly came to the conclusion that it would be better to suppress the house. She came to Niort with this intention in September of the following year, and great was the dismay when she announced her decision. It was received in mournful and submissive silence, which, at length, Mother Geoffroy broke by saying sorrowfully: "I deserve it all. I am more fit to unmake than to make foundations."

Then, clasping her hands, she turned in supplication to Mother Barat: "I ask only one thing," she said, "that you will spend half an hour before the Blessed Sacrament, that God may show you what will be most for His glory." Without a word, Mother Barat, as it were under obedience, turned in the direction of the chapel, and, kneeling before the altar, began to pray. The light she received led to a change of plan, and she decided to give the house at Niort a further trial. Success did not even then come at once, but it did come in the end, and the convent exists to this day.

Colonies were sent from Amiens, in the same year, to Ghent and Cuignières, so that, at the close of the year 1808, the Society of the Sacred Heart had six convents. After these, no more foundations were made for six years.

Mother Barat did not stay long at Poitiers after her return there from Niort, in July, 1808. She found all going on well under Mother Henriette Grosier, and, taking Mother Thérèse Maillucheau as her companion, she set out for Amiens.

Heavy anxieties pressed upon her with regard to that convent, and, as she could not consult Father Varin, who had been ordered to Besançon, she asked him to tell her where to seek counsel and guidance. He named the Abbé Montaigne as the holiest and wisest priest he knew, and advised her to consult him.

Monsieur Montaigne had been the friend and fellow-prisoner of Monsieur Emery in '93, and was now director of Saint-Sulpice. He was a man of much thought and of few words, but those few words were full of weight. We know from Mother Thérèse what took place at Mother Barat's first interview with him. "As soon as Monsieur Montaigne saw her, he said without any preamble: 'It is fortunate that there is a Holy Ghost to guide us, and that we are able to consult Him.' He then began to speak of the Society, and, amongst other surprising things, he said these words which he repeated several times: 'There is a germ of destruction in your Society, but a soul that has great power with God has prayed for you.' There was no reason for thinking that he knew any thing of what was going on at Amiens, except supernaturally."

Mother Thérèse adds that he said nothing to explain what he meant, but he spoke in private to Mother Barat, gave her advice and encouragement, and foretold that great trials were in store for her. His last words were : "Well, my child, let yourself be eaten up alive for our Lord."

From Paris, Mother Barat went on to Amiens. She was welcomed by the community, but she soon saw that the spirit was no longer the same. There were outward signs also of want of unity. The habit was changed, the Rule had undergone modifications which had not even been notified to her, the education given to the children had lost the stamp of thoroughness and simplicity that she had impressed upon it. Monsieur de Saint-Estève was the cause of all this, and the isolation in which the house at Amiens had inevitably been left, had given free scope to his innovations.

Mother Barat soon saw that the real power was in Madame Baudemont's hands, and that the bare title of Superior General was all that was left to her.

It is easy to account for the isolation of the community at Amiens, if we remember that when Mothers Deshayes and Grosier had left for Grenoble, there was no one with Madame Baudemont of those who had lived with Mother Barat, except Mother de Charbonnel and Madame Copina, an Italian whose attention was entirely given to the direction of the novices. Mother de Charbonnel's timidity and humility gave her so deep a distrust of her own judgment that she did not make her voice heard, and her time was fully taken up with the care of the children, and their studies. For political reasons the correspondence was reduced to a minimum, and, of late, Father Varin's visits had ceased altogether. From notes written by Mother Deshayes it is clear that as early as 1804, immediately in fact after Mother Barat's departure for Grenoble, Monsieur de Saint-Estève, conjointly with Madame Baudemont, had begun to compile Rules for the Society. In 1806, he insisted upon their being presented, in order to obtain the approbation of the Government, but according to the usual custom in such cases simple Statutes were drawn up.

Nevertheless, Monsieur de Saint-Estève continued his work, and instead of grounding his Rules upon the Institute of St. Ignatius, admitted in principle, to be the foundation of the Society, he made a compilation of those of various monastic Orders, thus changing the spirit and form of the new Congregation. There is no evidence forthcoming that he had any authorization from Father Varin for his mode of procedure. On the contrary, every thing points to his having taken the matter into his own hands. However this may be, through Madame Baudemont's compliance, he virtually governed the house, and little by little the changes he wished for were adopted.

"Our Mother General," writes Mother Thérèse, "who always completely set aside any personal considerations, showed no displeasure with regard to the changes. She accepted part of the new dress, and entrusted everything to God's hands. The glory of her Divine Master was all she cared for. Some of her friends advised her to exert her authority, but she acted simply in obedience to the interior voice which urged her to forget and sacrifice self in little things as well as great."

Her position was one of great difficulty, for it was chiefly her own authority that had been set aside. The spirit of the Society required that as Superior General she should be its mainspring of action, and this was impossible if confidence were denied her. But confidence must be won, and the low opinion that Mother Barat had of herself, made her quite ready to think that others were more deserving of it than she was.

She took great comfort in seeing that obedience and exactitude were practised by the community very perfectly, as well as devotedness and abnegation. The noviceship was fervent, the school numerous and in good order. In such a state of things as this, any sudden action might easily have brought on far greater evils than those that required remedy.

Mother Barat waited and prayed, and God enlightened her. She decided upon leaving Amiens, and going back to Grenoble. To maintain unity in the other houses was all-important at that juncture.

The correspondence between Mother Barat and Mother

Duchesne had never ceased, and the desires of the latter for the foreign missions were as ardent as ever. Mother Barat's work was always to restrain these desires, to hold the fiery nature in check, and bring it into subjection to the yoke of obedience, humility, and patience. At the end of 1807, she thought of bringing Mother Duchesne to Poitiers. "I should like to have you with me," she wrote, in December of that year, "but this is not the time. We must suffer, and suffer without consolation."

"You would have been too happy there," she wrote in April, 1808, "life must not be a time of enjoyment for you."

The following month she wrote again.

Poitiers, May, 1808.

My dear child, I have taken twenty-four hours of reflection and prayer before answering your letter. I can send you my reply therefore with the hope that the Holy Ghost will guide it, and will speak, at the same time, to your heart. It seems to me surprising that with sound sense and judgment such as yours, you could have conceived such an idea, grown fond of it, and persuaded yourself at last that it was God's will. It involves nothing less than forsaking a solid and lasting good, to go in search of one that is uncertain, and even almost impossible, on account of circumstances of which no doubt you are unaware. . . . I say nothing of the confidence I had in you, of the help I looked for from you in my weakened state of health; for personally I deserve only to be given up by all creatures, and although your letter pained me, I should not hesitate to grant what you ask, if I thought that God wished it. But every thing is against you, as I will explain. This is not the place to tell you all I think about it, but I hope to do so later. In the meantime I advise you to put out of your mind all thought of what you propose to me. Take as your special practice, the surrender of yourself into God's hands, and entire conformity to His will. Then try to have that good spirit—the spirit of all the saints—which shows us that we cannot become holy except by following the will of our Superior; that greater perfection looked for elsewhere is an illusion, a deceit of the Evil One to prevent our progress. What need you have of guidance! How far your imagination might lead you astray. But I must not let feelings run away with me. I will go for comfort to our Lord, and beseech Him to give all needful graces to a soul so dear to me.—Sophie Barat.

In the same year she wrote again to Mother Duchesne :

When shall you be a saint ? Have you to do any thing out of the way to attain sanctity ? No, only to suffer patiently all that crosses your will, to see God, and His good pleasure in every thing that happens to you. Saint Mary Magdalen of Pazzi attained a high degree of perfection by this means. Why should we lose by our own fault so many opportunities of advancing in the love of our Lord and in union with Him ? Union is perfect when two wills are so joined as to become but one. This shows us how far we are from the end to which we are tending, and for which we are upon earth.

At Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut all hearts were open to Mother Barat, and she was received with the utmost joy. Mother Deshayes had been long entreating for this visit in hopes of finding herself relieved from her office of Superior, but Mother Barat only confirmed her in her charge. Every thing at Sainte-Marie was after her own heart. Mother Duchesne writes : "Our joy at seeing our Mother again was indeed great. She spoke to us only about our Lord (who is the one love of her soul), and of what concerns His glory."

All was well with those at Grenoble, but when the news of their happiness reached Niort it made the contrast between Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut and this struggling little foundation all the harder to Emilie Giraud, who secretly watered with her tears every letter she received from there. She seems to have expressed as much, for at the end of September Mother Barat wrote to her :

You are still "little," God be praised ! You must grow bigger by degrees. . . . Our Lord delights in the simple and little ones, so try to be even smaller than you are. Oh, my dear child, what a sorry notion your letter gives me of your state. I do not dare to speak of it to your elders here, who are much more generous and detached than you are. . . . Does the Heart of our Lord not suffice you ? What would you have more ? "Too grasping is that heart for which God is not enough," as a great saint once said. You are indeed very grasping, my dear Emilie, since you are still so often taken up with creatures, and that in so purely natural a way. Oh ! how I thank our Lord for having thus separated you from your friends. You would never of yourself have purified your affection for those you love, if you had

remained with them. . . . Our Lord loves you with a jealous love, and you love Him so little! You are very ungrateful if your heart does not at once give Him of its best, and if you are not ashamed of having kept this for others. . . . But now I will not scold you any more. I daresay you have already reproached yourself with all this.

Your good Mother Duchesne teaches the children by day, and at night sits up with any who are ill; she looks after the temporal affairs of the house, and does it all without being overburdened by the work. She is a "valiant woman."

A little later, towards Christmas-time, she wrote to Mother Emilie:

Try to win the souls of the children to our Lord. If He were only known no one could help loving Him. But He is not known. "The Lord is great and exceedingly to be praised." * "The Lord is little and exceedingly to be loved." † Make Him known then, and He will very soon be loved."

The letter from which these last sentences are taken was written after Mother Barat's return to Amiens. She spent only a month at Grenoble, and went away alone at the end of October. She practised the detachment which she taught, by leaving at Sainte-Marie, Mother Thérèse Maillucheau, in whose society she found so much help and comfort.

There was no improvement in the state of things at Amiens on Mother Barat's return. Indeed fresh suffering awaited her there, but traces of this appear only now and then in the letters written at this time. The first was to Sister Chastaignier who had just made her vows.

Amiens. December 12th, 1808.

Your letter, my dear child, went to Grenoble in search of me, and as I had left, it followed me back here. Such is our life. I reckoned upon spending good part of the winter with friends whom I love, and whom I had not seen for a long time, but I was obliged to leave all at a moment's notice and travel alone, because there are few people and much work. You see we do not always do what we like, and have to go by another road than that of our own will.

* Psalm XLVII. 1 † St. Bernard.

I thought of you when I was leaving my dear companion. I cannot foresee any end to our separation. I leave her like all else in the bosom of the will of God. Well, my dear child, I will be as frank with you as you are with me, and admit that I felt the truth of what I said to you : that our hearts were united only in and for God. It was the same sorrow to me to leave her as it was to leave the rest, and since my departure I have not thought of her oftener than of the others whose employments, having more relation with my own, must bem ore in my thoughts. It is *lost labour therefore, for any one to attach herself to me*, and expect on my part any sort of return in kind. Whether because it is my nature or from habit—for I cannot ascribe it to virtue—I am not able, for my own part, to regret her. It is even a great consolation to me that she is where she is, because she is doing good, and any wish I might have had to keep her with me during my journeys never weighed with me one moment against the intention which I had when we left Poitiers, of placing her at Grenoble.

You may judge, my dear child, by what I tell you of the kind of heart I have, how pleased I was with your last letter, first the happiness you have had of uniting yourself so closely to our Lord, and then the resolution that you have so solemnly taken to love Him alone. Nothing on your part could give me greater consolation. Wonder at God's goodness towards you, and despise yourself if you do not now live on love.

About the same time, she wrote to Mother Duchesne :

Your letter was a great joy to me. I could not wish for greater happiness than that of knowing that the troubles of your soul are past, and that you are in peace. I thank our Lord who has been good enough to give me this comfort in the keen pain of our separation. My happiness is, as it were, bound up in yours, and I own that I should grieve to hear you were still in distress and anxiety. I cannot enjoy true peace when you are without it. Do not be surprised at this ; I see more clearly than you do the merciful designs God has upon you, and the efforts of the Evil One to frustrate them : and when by not resisting him you, as it were, put arms into his hands, can I grieve too much ? . . . I feel the absence and the loss of the friend I have left you, and rejoice at the sorrow, because my loss is your gain. What have I else to do on earth but to rejoice when all is well with you ? I am not here for myself, or at least I ought not to be, since my God asks me constantly to sacrifice self for the good and progress

of souls. Ask in your prayers, my dear child, that I may not fear the Cross unalloyed, that I may find no happiness elsewhere, and that my sole affection and my only consolation may be in this treasure.

The Cross unalloyed was indeed her portion just then, for she was in the midst of very trying circumstances. Amongst the good works which sprang up at Amiens in the first days of peace after the Revolution, was one which, with the Society of the Sacred Heart, owed its foundation to Father Varin. It was that of the Sisters of Notre-Dame, founded especially for the education of the poorer classes. Father Varin wished the two Institutions to remain quite distinct, but he also wished that the closest bonds of friendship should unite the members of both Societies.

Mother Barat once told the story of how this was begun. "As Mother Julie Billiart's Congregation," she said, "and mine were so closely united, one day Father Varin assembled us all together, and held a little festival for the opening of our works. We met in a very small room which served as a chapel, and Mother Julie, who could not walk, was carried into the midst of us. After Mass we renewed our vows, and Father Varin gave us a little exhortation. When he had raised all present to great fervour and zeal, he suddenly stopped in his discourse, and looking at us he exclaimed: 'But were we not foolish in doing what we have done? What have we undertaken? What can we hope to effect *with that?*' and he pointed to Mother Julie and myself. Father Sellier, who was present said afterwards that he felt his flesh creep when he heard these words. But we were by no means discouraged. We only concluded that God, who loves to work with nothing, makes use of the things 'that are not that He might bring to nought the things that are.'"

Since then, the Congregation of Notre-Dame had prospered and increased, but, after a time, Monsieur de Saint-Estève, who was the confessor of Mother Julie's community, set his heart upon changing the fundamental Constitutions of their Institute by abolishing the office of Superior General, and making the houses independent of one another. As Mother

Julie resisted the innovations, he denounced her to the Bishop as obstinate, rebellious, and incapable of governing. This was the state of things when Mother Barat returned to Amiens at the end of 1808, and it caused her great grief. But she could do nothing, and Mother Julie was ordered to resign her charge, to leave Amiens, and even the diocese. She obeyed without a word, but her daughters followed her. On January 15th, 1809, Mother Julie wrote, they "left Amiens in great peace, and love of our Lord Jesus Christ." They transferred their Mother House to Namur where it is to this day.*

After their departure a difficulty arose. They had a large orphanage in Amiens, and as all the nuns had left except two who had yielded to the pressure put upon them, there was no one to carry on the work. The Bishop then had recourse to the Society of the Sacred Heart, and asked for some one to keep together the orphanage, and what remained of the community, until persons of the Order of Notre-Dame were formed for the work. The one chosen for this strange office was a novice named Marie Elizabeth Prevost. She left the Oratoire with two other novices, and, on March 3rd, was, in presence of the Bishop, elected Superior. The following day, Madame Baudemont wrote to her a letter of congratulation which shows conclusively how Mother Barat was ignored. It would seem incredible, if it were not proved to be the fact, that she was at that very time in Amiens. Not only is Mother Barat, and her authority as Superior General not alluded to in the letter, but the name of founder is given to Monsieur de Saint-Estève. The tone of the letter is full of self-assertion, and its pompous sentences breathe a spirit quite at variance with that of Father Varin and Mother Barat.

Mother Prevost sent her answer the same day. Every line shows a childlike spirit of obedience and humility, but there is no allusion to Mother Barat. For four years she continued her laborious work of a constant struggle against difficulties. The Congregation of the Sisters of Notre-Dame prospered in Belgium, but the separated branch bore no fruit. The eyes

* See *Life of the Venerable Julie Billiart*, p. 188.

of the good Bishop of Amiens were enlightened at the end of that time, and he wrote to Mother Julie owning that he had been deceived, and begging her to return. He also reinstated her in all her rights as Superior General. But the obstacles she met with seemed to her an indication of the will of God that the house at Amiens should be suppressed. Mother Prevost was then free, and to her great joy was received back at her own request into the Society of the Sacred Heart, where for fifty years she was one of the firmest supporters of Mother Barat's work.

At the time when Mother Julie was ordered to leave Amiens, Mother Barat wrote the following letter to Mother Duchesne, who had asked to be allowed to put herself under the spiritual guidance of Mother Thérèse.

February 3rd, 1809.

You beg me to put you as a child of a day old, under the guidance of one who will lead you in the path of perfection. How can I refuse any thing that will help you on your way, my dear child? Besides it seems to be the will of God, since your good Superior had asked for this favour for you, and it is she who must grant it if she has not already done so. . . . How happy you are in having two Mothers who love our Lord so much! Strive to walk in their footsteps. Now you have one to look after you who loves Him so deeply, I hope that your long resistance will be at an end, and that you will love Him as she does. Take care of my dear Thérèse; see that she has undisturbed sleep. Make sure that nothing keeps her awake except our Lord's voice, if He calls her. Tell her for me to ask Him sometimes (as St. Gertrude used to do) to let her sleep. She must say to Him: "I have a great deal of work to do for you to-morrow, Lord, and unless I sleep I shall not be able to do it." Say this when you have an opportunity, but cleverly, so as not to let her suspect that you have told of her.

A month later she wrote:

If her stay at Grenoble helps you, and you learn from her how to love our Lord better, how glad I shall be that I left her with you! I am getting fond of being alone as I am here. There are no sacrifices I would not make, if I could thereby give you a lift on towards the perfection that our Lord asks of you. Mother Thérèse will be yours as long as she stays with you, and you must be her strength and comfort.

When, with the Spouse in the Canticles, she says: *Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis quia amore langueo*, remember that she is not asking for the blossoms or the fruits of earth, but for souls who will present her with the flowers and the fruits of every virtue. She loves these and these alone, because her Heavenly Bridegroom cares for them. It is she who showed me the meaning I have just applied to this text. Let her find in you the fruits of all the virtues that may rejoice her in our Lord.

When speaking of this time, long afterwards, Mother Barat referred to it as one in which "she had suffered much, and loved much." A great many of her solitary hours were spent in a little tribune that had a window looking into the chapel. Her eyes rested upon the tabernacle or upon a picture of the Crucifixion that was in the tribune itself, and from these long hours of prayer she came forth with strength and light to bear the many trials that were pressing on her.

When the chapel at Amiens was pulled down that a larger one might be built, this little tribune was carefully preserved on account of the recollections attached to it.

CHAPTER XII

GHENT. GRENOBLE. CUIGNIÈRES. 1809–1810.

> And through the heat of conflict keeps the law
> In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw.
>
> WORDSWORTH.

ABOUT the middle of March, 1809, Mother Barat went to Ghent, to visit the house which had been founded there from Amiens in the previous year. The Bishop of Ghent, Mgr de Broglie, an early friend of Father Varin, had applied, in 1806, for a foundation in his episcopal city, which was at that time within the limits of the French Empire. By Father Varin's wish, no further steps were to be taken in the matter, until a Belgian novice at Amiens, Marie Antoinette de Peñeranda, should have made her vows. Madame de Peñeranda was born at Bruges, in 1779, but her family was of Spanish origin, and she claimed St. Francis Borgia as an ancestor. From the time of her First Communion, the whole force of her very resolute and energetic will was bent on doing what was most perfect, but for some years she was not free to follow her vocation. Her mother's early death left her at the head of her father's house, and she was obliged to wait till her sister was grown up before joining the Society. She had given proofs, during the time she spent in the world, of great virtue as well as of remarkable talents for management, and these were now to be fully exercised.

Her first difficulty at Ghent came from the want of a suitable house, but at last, through the kindness of the Bishop, the abbey of Dooresele, or Doorezeele, became the property of the Society. The abbey is a square building of

great size with large gardens, wide cloisters, and a beautiful church. Several nuns were sent there from Amiens, and the school was opened in November. When Mother Barat came there the following March, she rejoiced to find the stamp of poverty upon every thing. She wrote on the 26th of that month, to Mother Duchesne: "My thoughts turn to you here where there is so much of your beloved poverty. I like so much the room I have, with its plain deal table, and every thing else to match—no linen, no furniture. The few things they have for the use of the altar are borrowed. The church is so beautiful that it does not need decoration."

In June, the news reached Mother Barat of the illness of her father, and she set out for Joigny. But she was obliged to shorten her stay there, on account of business at Poitiers, and she left before the end came. He died on June 25th, the death of the just, strengthened by all the sacraments of the Church, and comforted by his daughter's visit. She felt his loss deeply, for the love of parents and home was very strong within her heart. Eye-witnesses tell us that when she reached Joigny during her father's life-time, it was her delight to come upon him unawares in his working-dress, throw her arms around his neck, and introduce him to any of her daughters who might be travelling with her, and it was remarked that she chose any whose station was somewhat above that of the others for these visits to her humble home. Amongst other little attentions, she used to send to Joigny the choice flowers which the school-children offered her every year on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen.

The summer was spent at Poitiers and Niort, and in November she travelled to Grenoble. The year had there been marked by one great event. Napoleon, in his arrogance, had laid sacrilegious hands upon the Vicar of Christ, and, with utter disregard for his age and infirmity, had caused him with his minister, Pacca, to be carried off from Rome. In many places on his way, the Holy Father received ovations from the population, and, as he neared France, the enthusiasm became even greater. Nowhere was it more hearty than at Grenoble,

where, Pacca writes in his *Memoirs*, "Pius VII. might have been a happy father, returning, after a long absence, to his loving family." He was lodged in the Prefecture, which is just opposite Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, on the other side of the Isère, and every evening, during his stay of ten days, the community and children watched with intense interest the crowds that thronged around him at the time of his evening walk in the gardens of the Prefecture. They were not too far off to see him extend his hand towards the convent, as if to give them a special blessing. Sixty of the children were presented to him on July 20th, and he laid his trembling hand upon the head of each, but it was remarked that it rested on some longer than on others. All these entered religion, and nine of them became nuns of the Sacred Heart.

Mother Duchesne wrote of this joy as well as of her constant desire for the foreign missions to Mother Barat, who answered her as follows:

Poitiers, August 17th, 1809.

Calm your imagination, work at your perfection where you are, whilst waiting for better things. Why do we not recognize the snares the devil lays for us? He amuses us and keeps us busied about schemes for future perfection, which perhaps may never be realized, while he makes us neglect the means of progress at hand. We lose our time, death comes, and we appear before God, with some merit, no doubt, but less than we should have had if we had been faithful. You understand this; turn it to account, and do not let it be for nothing that God has given you a sound judgment and good-will. Good-bye, my child, I have no need to say how much I love you, I think even more than ever. Pray God that it may be for your true progress, and for this reason, ask for my conversion.

On January 29th, 1810, she wrote to Mother Chastaignier:

If you are ambitious for yourself, you are so also for your Mother, and I know that if you want a place near the throne of the Lamb, you wish me to be there too. If this is so, my dear child, ask without pity for me sufferings, humiliations, detachment from every thing, *privation of every pleasure*, that once for all, I may take the road by which saints are made. However, think it over before you pray that I may have this last trial: for if God hears you, I shall have to give

up the pleasure of seeing you in this world, and I am not quite prepared for this, if I can be of use to you. If, on the contrary, I were to be an obstacle to your perfection, I should not hesitate to say good-bye till eternity.

In February, she wrote to Mother Emilie Giraud :

I think I shall see you again this year, though I do not yet know where or how. I feel all the more sure of it that you have given it up, and have made the resolution to refuse no sacrifice to our Lord. You know that He gives back what is willingly offered, and with His gifts He gives so much sweetness that one would wish always to have something to sacrifice to Him. Then one feels sorry to have only one heart, but very glad at least to have *several Mothers to give up*, and the more dearly they are loved, the more eagerly and generously are they offered. Is not this your way ? I hope we shall find some minutes to talk of our Lord. He wishes me to keep silence here ; it is what is most fitting for me. How few know all there is in silence ! Ask our Lord to teach me this Himself.

The allusions in these letters to the sorrow of parting and separation, probably referred to the loss of Mother Thérèse Maillucheau, who had already left Grenoble for Poitiers when Mother Barat arrived at Sainte-Marie on December 2nd. Her stay at Grenoble was to last nearly a year, and during those months her time was fully occupied by the interests of the children, noviceship, and community. It was a great pleasure to her, loving the poor as she did, to see a hundred and fifty little scholars come every morning, basket in hand, up the steep hill to the convent in time for the seven o'clock Mass. They spent the whole day at Sainte-Marie, working during certain hours at glove-making. The boarding-school was also full, and Mother Barat found the children every thing she could wish. Louise de Vidaud, who afterwards joined the Society, was, at that time, one of the youngest amongst them. She says : " While Mother Barat was at Grenoble she liked to see us all, either alone or with the others, and she came sometimes to our classes and recreations. One thing she often did was to call the little ones around her, while she kept off the elder ones. We were as proud as possible of this, and

clustered at her knees, waiting impatiently for what she had to say, for her face told us she was not displeased. Then she would look us well over as if to find out whether we had been good, and speak of our little delinquencies in such a way that we almost thought she had seen every thing. Sometimes she took out of her pocket a little book, *The Children's Treasure*, which had stories suited to us. She read us some, and made her own remarks on what she read, pointing out the moral, if necessary, for our benefit. We were delighted with all this, and deeply convinced of her love for us, and her sanctity."

Father Barat was often at Sainte-Marie at this time, to give retreats, or other spiritual helps, for he was living at Belley, the only house the Fathers of the Faith still possessed in France.

In June, 1810, Mother Barat left Grenoble, and she wrote from Lyons, in that month, to Mother Duchesne:

I do not know when I shall be back again amongst you all. I wish for it for their sakes and for yours, not that I think I am of any use at Sainte-Marie, but because, I believe, God wishes me to spend some more time with you. Pray that it may not be wasted, that I may be filled with His Spirit in order to be able to do something for you. Really I am ashamed when I see how little use I was during my stay. God allowed it to humble me. No doubt this is the lesson I am most in want of, since it recurs so frequently.

The following month she wrote again to the same:

Paris, July 3rd, 1810.

Your letter seemed to imply a reproach for having kept secret the departure of the missionaries; as a matter of fact I knew nothing whatever about it. The ones I knew of who were setting out, were quite unsuitable, and certainly I cannot let you go so far on a venture. We must know where you are going, and what for. I am still at a loss to understand how a person of good common-sense can be so led by her imagination as not to look before her, and adapt means to ends. Happily your Mothers think for you, and you accept their guidance; else you would do many rash things, and after having been round the world might, as likely as not, make us your curtsey with La Fontaine's line: *Il s'en alla comme il était venu.*

You will allow me this little joke, I am sure, all the more willingly because I add in sober earnest: perhaps, after all, you are not so far from seeing your hopes realized. Many things are leading you that way, and yet only one will put it off indefinitely. Let calm waiting be, if possible, your constant attitude, and for this, as for every thing else, live in the good pleasure of God.

A little later she wrote to the same:

Lyons, November 22nd, 1810:

I told you and I repeat it again: your cross will last for awhile only; wait for the right time without anxiety or fear. Is it for you to search into the ways of God? Only believe your Mother, if you have not yet seen the realization of her promises, it is because you are in too great a hurry. God's work is done in the shade and slowly. The Psalmist says: "A thousand years are in Thy sight as yesterday." Courage, my child: *Tempus veniet et non tardabit.*

The object of this journey had been to consult Monsieur Montaigne in Paris, and Father Varin who was then at Vichy, with regard to the Constitutions of the Society; for as Monsieur de Saint-Estève continued his work of compilation the danger of ultimate loss of the primitive spirit became greater. In August she returned to Grenoble, but left again in November for Paris, where she spent a month to make her retreat, and again consult Monsieur Montaigne, who (to avoid suspicion) is about this time usually spoken of in the letters to and from Mother Barat as the "Grandfather" of the Society. He sent Mother Duchesne a message which Mother Barat thus passed on to her: "'Do not let her give up hoping,' he said in that tone of voice which makes me believe him, as if his words were an article of faith; 'only let her strive to become humble, obedient, mortified, and calmly abandoned to God's will, and our Lord will make known to you His good pleasure'."

She wrote to Mother Duchesne before her retreat:

December 16th, 1810.

I have made my resolution, and I hope that during my coming retreat it will be more deeply graven in my heart. I will refuse my God nothing more. Nay, I wish to anticipate His will, and embrace it joyfully at any cost. May God uphold my weakness, and you, Philippine, pray for your Mother.

One house of the six belonging at this time to the Society was unknown to Mother Barat, and she took this opportunity of visiting it. Cuignières is a hamlet nine miles from Clermont, in the diocese of Beauvais. Before 1793 the Sisters of Charity had a small hospital on rising ground at the outskirts of the village, but they left it, and the building had since been untenanted. In 1807, at the time of the dispersion of the Fathers of the Faith, when it seemed very likely that other religious bodies would meet with a similar fate, it was thought prudent to provide a place of refuge where in case of persecution the community of Amiens could take shelter until the storm had passed. Madame Baudemont, acting on her own responsibility, accepted the offer made her by the owner of this house, and in March, 1808, Mother Desmarquest was sent there with a community consisting of one choir nun, and one lay-sister. Great privations both spiritual and temporal followed; but Mother Desmarquest, both by education, for she was a farmer's daughter, and by grace, for she was eminently a soul of prayer, was well-fitted to meet such hardships. No one of all Mother Barat's daughters helped her more in after years to establish in the Society the love and practice of a hard and hidden life, united with a life of prayer. No one helped her more to make the houses that were founded, each in its own way and in its degree, a reproduction of the Holy House at Nazareth.

Mother Desmarquest had entered the Society only a few months before Mother Barat's departure for Grenoble, but this short time was enough for one whose every instinct was so thoroughly religious and whose judgment was so sound, to gain a true appreciation of her Superior General. Her fidelity was unswerving and although Madame Baudemont showed her the utmost confidence, she was never misled into any deviation from the line of duty, or any want of obedience to the true head of the Society.

In the depths of winter Mother Barat set out for Cuignières. A heavy fall of snow made travelling difficult, and the state of things she found when she arrived at her destination was destitution rather than poverty. Although years had passed

since the foundation, little progress had been made, but it was only then that Mother Barat learnt how much suffering had been undergone. As Cuignières was destined to be a retreat for the Amiens community in case of persecution, as little communication as possible was to take place between the houses, and isolation therefore added its trials to those of poverty.

For a long time Cuignières possessed only one pupil; after a time a postulant offered herself, and by degrees other pupils followed, the daughters of the farmers of the neighbourhood. Their life was like that of their mistresses, very poor and hard, but they learnt to love it, through their admiration for the example set them, especially by the Superior.

To the trials of isolation and poverty had been added, in the early days, the want even of spiritual help. It was some time before the nuns obtained leave to have the Blessed Sacrament under their roof. They had therefore to go to the parish church, but the Curé had incurred suspension, and Mass was only said occasionally by priests from a distance. However, good came for Cuignières even from this trial. There was living at this time at Clermont a learned and holy priest, Monsieur de Lamarche. He had been chaplain to the Carmelite nuns at Compiègne, and when during the Reign of Terror they had all died on the scaffold, he took his stand below the guillotine to give each one as she passed up the last blessing. After the Revolution, he retired to Clermont, where he devoted himself to the desolate parishes of the country districts in the neighbourhood. In this way he learnt to know Mother Desmarquest and her companions, and in pity for their destitution he offered to say Mass and hear their confessions every fortnight. He soon found out that Mother Desmarquest was called to high perfection, and did his best to second God's work in her soul. His influence, too, brought to the convent friends who were of use to the nuns in various ways.

The poverty, solitude, and holiness of Cuignières delighted Mother Barat. "If they go on as they have begun, our Sisters here will be the saints of the Society," she wrote to Mother Duchesne. It was almost the realization of her ideal. She

wrote of it as "the crib of Bethlehem," and she would have been glad to stay there if God had not called her elsewhere. "One fire and one candle was enough for the whole house," she wrote, "what a good time it was!" She did all in her power to relieve the wants of the community, and left them every thing she had, even the clothes she brought with her.

From Cuignières she went to Amiens, but only on the way to Ghent, where Mother Maillucheau was mistress of novices. She arrived in February, 1811, and remained there for three months, but was ill most of the time.

"Thérèse wished to keep me," Mother Barat wrote in April, "and our Lord heard her prayer. I am imprisoned at present on the banks of the Scheldt. Do not be uneasy at this attack of spitting of blood. There has been no return of it. You know, or rather, you believe, we ought to suffer and not die."

"How long life is!" she exclaimed one day. "Suffering is the only thing that makes it bearable; that is why St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi wished always to suffer and never to die." Mother Thérèse interrupted her by saying: "That would not suit me at all. I much prefer St. Teresa's "suffering or death." "Yes," Mother Barat answered, "that is good, but the highest perfection, the purest love, is to renounce the sight of our Lord in order to suffer for Him." Once, when she was more ill than usual, some one expressed a fear that she wanted to go to Heaven before them. "Oh, no," she answered, "I must have more of the Cross. I shall not go before the Cross is well planted in all your hearts."

One evening at recreation she commented upon the words of St. Augustine: *Videbimus*, we shall see God; *laudabimus*, we shall praise Him; *amabimus*, we shall love Him. "She showed us," wrote Mother Adrienne Michel, "how we can *see* God through His creatures by grace, by faith, and by union with Him; how we can *praise* Him by purity of intention, by our actions, good example, singing hymns, &c. When she came to the word: *amabimus*, she stopped, saying she feared to weaken its meaning by speaking of it. 'Those only who have loved can speak of love,' she added."

After leaving Dooresele she wrote to Mother Duchesne:

Amiens, June 7th, 1811.

I only received your letter yesterday. Thérèse forwarded it to me, for we are no longer together. . . . Every thing passes in this world, pleasures as well as sorrows. We must beware of clinging to the former and must love the latter, which will bring us an eternal weight of glory in Heaven. On both sides we were very sorry to part. They are a dear simple community. You would love them all as we do if you knew them."

Who could have foreseen that in two years Dooresele would have separated from the Society?

CHAPTER XIII

THE CRISIS

> And should the twilight darken into night,
> And sorrow grow to anguish, be thou strong;
> Thou art in God, and nothing can go wrong
> Which a fresh life-pulse cannot set aright.
>
> GEORGE MACDONALD.

WHEN Mother Barat arrived at Amiens in May, 1811, Monsieur de Saint-Estève's work on his proposed Constitutions was almost finished, and it was for the first time laid before her. But she was thoroughly dissatisfied with what she found. That ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart, that desire of enkindling the devotion in the souls of others, which was the very life of the Society in the mind of Father de Tournély, played here only a secondary part. Other Rules than those of the Society of Jesus were adopted as the basis of the Institute, and yet de Tournély, from whom it sprang, had been inspired to "add to the glory of St. Ignatius by enrolling among his children, the children of the Sacred Heart."

Father Varin and Mother Barat herself had for some years past been engaged on the same great work. The help of Fathers Barat and Druilhet had been invited, and it seems that Monsieur de Saint-Estève's proffered assistance had not been refused. However, the latter was not one to play a secondary part in any affair, if he could obtain a higher position. He had allowed himself to be officially styled "founder" of the Society. The house at Amiens, of which he was the director, was the Mother-House, its first house in every sense of the word. He imagined therefore that to legislate for the Society was quite

within his province, was, in fact, his right. He founded his Constitutions upon the Rule of St. Basil. His sister, a professed nun in the convent at Amiens, had been an Ursuline before the Revolution, and her recollections of this Order were very largely incorporated in the draft. Madame Baudemont had been a Poor Clare, and portions of that Rule were also brought in. Other gleanings were taken from various sources, and the result was a heterogeneous assemblage of things, good in themselves, but possessing, as a whole, neither unity nor consistency. Scarcely any thing was taken from the Rule of St. Ignatius, and the name of "Society of the Sacred Heart" was replaced by that of "Apostolines," which Monsieur de Saint-Estève had himself invented.

Vainly must Mother Barat have sought in this disjointed work the spirit of the Sacred Heart, which was not only the true life of her own soul, but the only true life of the Society. Discussion or expostulation would have been worse than useless at that juncture. In a house where her authority was so far set aside as to be almost null, what could she do but suffer and pray? Having referred the matter of the Constitutions of Monsieur de Saint-Estève to Father Varin and her brother, she left Amiens, and, for four long years, went from one house to another, keeping up in all hearts the devotion to the Sacred Heart, as the best hope of preserving to the Society its true spirit and its true name. If hearts were faithful, the Society was safe, and she, at least, if she could do nothing else, would labour to save it in this way. Some words which she said at Niort in August, 1811, show how all this was dominant in her soul, and gave her courage to bear and suffer every thing for this great end.

Every evening [we read in a journal written at that time], our Mother assembled those amongst us who, by day, were busy with the children. The rule of the school was read to us, and the comments she made upon it gave us an ever deeper conviction of the greatness of our vocation, the responsibility it involves, and the strict account God will require from us of the souls He has entrusted to our care. She showed us how our chief work was to form in the

children genuine piety, and to mould their characters on the type of the "valiant woman," as described by the Holy Ghost. She dwelt on the necessity for us on our part, if we were to do this, to obtain the virtues of one who is, at the same time, "apostle" and "spouse," one who, clinging to nothing here below, cares only to make her Divine Lord known and loved, and to establish His Kingdom in the hearts of all. After each of these meetings, we felt as though clothed with the spirit of our Lord, by the charity, zeal, and holy energy with which she inspired us.

Mother Barat wrote from Poitiers, in October of the same year, 1811, to Mother Duchesne :

I am writing in haste, and must be brief, for my eyes are troublesome, and I am very tired. Do not, however, think that this weakness is caused by anxiety ; as difficulties thicken, my confidence in God increases. We must pray and be faithful, and God will not abandon us. "He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob." Please tell your Reverend Mother to be careful that nothing transpires, especially at Amiens, of the thorough disapproval which Father Varin has, on my brother's report, given to the last edition of the Rules made in Madame Baudemont's house. The utmost reserve is absolutely necessary, otherwise I shall be in an extremely difficult position.

Father Varin's opinion was therefore unfavourable to the work of Monsieur de Saint-Estève, but, in spite of this, copies of it were, in course of time, sent from Amiens to the other houses. Mother Barat, whose great object was to prevent a separation, had the work read to, at least, the elder members of the communities she was visiting, and she watched anxiously to see the impression produced. She carefully kept back any expression of her own feeling on the matter, but the work met with dislike and disapproval from all those who had received from Father Varin and from her the true spirit of the Society, that spirit of devotion to the Sacred Heart which was wanting to the new Constitutions. Indeed they felt, in listening to them, that their effect was to withdraw the Society from the devotion that had given it birth.

The year 1811 was a most critical one for religion in France. Napoleon was at the height of his glory. He looked

upon himself as the sole master of Europe, and was determined to make the Church subservient to his will. To punish his resistance to the unjust will of the Emperor, Mgr de Broglie, the Bishop of Ghent, was arrested, and was kept in solitary confinement as a prisoner at Vincennes. The same ill-treatment would have befallen Mgr d'Aviau of Bordeaux, but for the plea urged by the official charged with the execution of Napoleon's will, that the Archbishop was a saint, and that "all the world would be up in arms if violence were used against him." He was, at this very time, urging Mother Barat to fulfil her promise of making a foundation at Bordeaux. Other foundations were asked for, but it was no time then for putting forth fresh branches; the very life of the parent-tree was in danger.

An unexpected turn of events occurred in June, 1812. Monsieur de Saint-Estève was suddenly arrested by the imperial police at Amiens, and carried to Paris, where he was put into prison. Political reasons were assigned by some for this summary proceeding, but it has been attributed by others to disputes with episcopal authority. He put the finishing touches to his work on the Constitutions in his prison cell, and thus the prestige of a Confessor for the Faith was now added to enhance the value of his work in the eyes of his admirers. Advantage was taken of this by Madame Baudemont to send Mother Ducis with a copy of the Constitutions to Ghent. Her mission, however, proved a failure, for, when Mother de Peñeranda read them, she declared that they were not at all what she wanted. She wished to live under the Rule of St. Ignatius, and would leave the Society rather than adopt Constitutions wholly devoid of that for which she had joined it.

Mother Barat thought that perhaps the absence of Monsieur de Saint-Estève from Amiens might give her a chance of regaining her influence in that community, and she went to consult Father Varin on the matter. He thought the time was not come, and she returned to Grenoble, whither she soon summoned Mother Bigeu, as she intended to make her Superior of the house instead of Mother Deshayes, whom she wanted

elsewhere. Her life was more than ever now one of suffering and prayer, but her confidence was too firmly anchored to be at the mercy of the storms of life.

She wrote in August to Mother Emilie Giraud :

Well, let us give ourselves entirely to God's holy will. If you knew all the good He has in store for you if you are faithful, you would love Him for what has come and gone, but for what is coming you would love Him to infatuation.

A little later she wrote again to the same :

Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, November 20th, 1812.

To-morrow is a great day. I am writing to you in the painted room where we were all gathered together eight years ago round that large fire-place. Do you remember it ? My brother was there . . . and then the next day ! That day you became my child and I your Mother, but above all, that day our Lord became your Spouse. I could almost wish that delightful time to come over again. Since then, you understand, I have had scarcely any pleasure. Then we were children, and our Lord treated us accordingly ; now we need food more strengthening than milk, and for the spouses of Jesus Christ it is the Cross, and always the Cross.

We must revert to this time only to encourage ourselves to suffer by thinking how quickly these eight years have flown, and with them all the trials they brought. What remains will pass as quickly. Let us take courage then, and await with firm confidence the bright day of eternity.

Do you mean where is my home on earth ? Indeed I have none. But if you want to know whereabouts in Sainte-Marie I am living just now, it is in a little room adjoining the noviceship. Mother Duchesne, who must be obeyed sometimes, has had a fire-place made in it, and, to enlarge it, the wall that divided it from the room on the other side has been knocked down. As soon as the winter is over, I shall leave my new lodgings. You see I must not cling to any thing on this earth. . . .

I am quite alone on this side of the house. It was my own wish. When the rats hold their midnight revels overhead, which they often do, I lie awake while their games last, and, if you were there, perhaps silence would not be so well kept. Mother Duchesne did not like to leave me alone like this, but she had no choice about it.

We can well imagine what was Mother Barat's sorrow at having to refuse foundations during this sad time. She "longed," as Mother Thérèse said, "to cover the whole face of the earth with convents of the Sacred Heart," for her zeal was commensurate with her love.

It is more grievous than any thing else [she said], to see faith waning on every side of us, and to be able to do nothing, or next to nothing, to stop the danger. O my child, why are we so bad? Why have we so little fervour? Every thing is asleep. We are the disciples slumbering in the Garden of Olives, whilst our Master is suffering. Let us at least give ear to His counsels, His loving complaints: let us never cease to watch and pray, and ask Him for grace to follow Him to the Cross, and to be amongst the few who climbed with Him the dear and rugged mountain.

Imagine [she wrote to Mother Emilie in January, 1813], that we have to refuse or postpone four foundations most urgently asked for, and one more promising than the other. And why? Because we are not good enough, for as to numbers we could manage it. . . . It is a miserable thing to see the work of God stopped by our fault. Ah, I must not say *our* fault,—mine and mine only. Happy at least should I be if my great grief over it might count as part of my penance.

As the months rolled by, the only balm they brought to Mother Barat's sorrow was the assurance that everywhere except at Amiens the true spirit of the Sacred Heart was in full vigour. In the autumn of 1813, she thought the time was come to finish, in concert with Father Varin, the Constitutions which had been the subject of his thoughts and prayers for some years past, and taking Mother Deshayes as her companion, she left Grenoble in September for Besançon, near which town Father Varin was living with his sister, Madame de Chevroz.

As Mother Barat travelled northwards towards the frontier, many a sight met her eyes that must have filled her compassionate heart with keenest pangs of sorrow. The last remnants of the brilliant army which, the year before, had left France flushed with hope of victory, were now plodding their weary way home from Russia. The straggling parties of

these poor wayfarers, exhausted by hunger, cold, and sickness, were often met upon the roads round Besançon, and the town itself was full of them. The tide had turned; the bayonets had dropped from the stiffened fingers of Napoleon's troops, and his glory, as that of all who attack the Vicar of Christ, was passing quickly from him.

The Château de Chevroz, Mother Barat's destination, stands under the shade of overhanging trees, and within a stone's-throw of the village church. It is an old moated and turreted manor-house of the fifteenth or sixteenth century, guarded by a watch-tower; and the life led by its inmates was almost monastic in its regularity. One member of the family circle at that time was a boy of twelve years old, an adopted son of Madame de Chevroz, afterwards the well-known Jesuit, Father Jeantier; and his recollections, written after Mother Barat's death, give us some glimpses of her visit.

Every morning [he says], I served Father Varin's Mass at which Mother Barat received Holy Communion. She spent hours and hours in the church. Eight o'clock was supper-time, but the meal was not begun until the guests staying in the house were assembled. It was quite dark by that time, and as one evening Mother Barat was not to be found, all agreed she must be in the church. "Take a lantern, Ferdinand," Madame de Chevroz said, "and go to look for her." "Look well about," some one added, "for she hides away in the benches like a mouse." In Franche-Comté there are no chairs in the churches, but benches with wooden backs nearly three feet high, so that any one bending down is lost sight of. I saw no one in the church at first, so I went with my lantern from bench to bench, and at last descried something black in one of them. It was Mother Barat, lost in prayer. I had to call her several times before I aroused her attention. "Madame, Madame, it is supper-time," I said. "Yes, my child," she answered gently, rising up and emerging from her corner, "I am coming, I will follow you." And she followed the light of my lantern. O good Mother, be now to me from Heaven, *Lucerna ardens et lucens*.

Pondering over this afterwards, I came to the conclusion that these long hours before the Blessed Sacrament, in such close union with the Sacred Heart, were spent in asking for and receiving light to frame or mature the Constitutions of her Institute.

Another thing confirmed me in this idea. Some hours after Mass I used to see Father Varin and Mother Barat walking up and down under the trees near the house, looking deep in thought. Father Varin had a note-book and pencil; he walked slowly, sometimes stopping altogether for a time to write, then crossing out what he had written, and writing again. I often said to myself: "They must be writing and correcting the Constitutions. What charity there must be in work done by minds and hearts on fire with the charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for this is the habitual dwelling-place of Father Varin and Mother Barat."

Early in November, Mother Barat left Besançon. She wrote from Joigny to Mother Duchesne to tell her that Mother Deshayes would not return to Grenoble, and added: "In the course of the year I will bring you the result of the work we have been doing, and which I hope will be for your greater good. I will put off till then the plan we had made of revising together our holy Rules."

She made her retreat in Paris, and went back alone to Amiens, arriving on January 14th, 1814.

During Mother Barat's visits to Paris for several years past, she had been the guest of a widow of very distinguished position and great virtue, Madame de Gramont-d'Aster, who had rooms in the Convent of St. Thomas of Villanova. This lady's two daughters, Antoinette and Eugénie, had both entered the noviceship at Amiens, and later, after an eventful life of forty-seven years, their mother followed their example. At the time she entered, her daughter Eugénie, a woman of remarkable strength of character and great talent, had just made her vows, and had been placed under Mother Copina in charge of the novices. It was a delight to Mother Barat to see the simplicity and docility with which the mother obeyed her daughter's word. The noviceship, and indeed the whole house, was full of fervour, and with few exceptions no one in the Oratoire had a suspicion of the impending difficulties. Madame de Gramont d'Aster made her vows early in 1814. Louis XVIII. was by that time on the throne, and ten days later, on his way through Amiens,

begged her to come to Paris as lady in waiting to Madame Royale, as she had been to her mother, Queen Marie Antoinette. But the vows already taken made this impossible; indeed at her own earnest entreaty the time of her noviceship had been shortened, as she foresaw the request which she must have complied with under other circumstances.

The fervour of the community at Amiens gave Mother Barat great hope that the crisis would pass without the misfortune she feared. Soon after her arrival she wrote: "Every thing is going on perfectly well here, all is obedience, regularity, and happiness. God's blessing is felt on the house.' And again a few weeks later: "I am once more in my old quarters, but I am not at rest there. Yet a great deal of good has already come of it, not by my work, my child, for I am, as you know, unable to do any good, but rather by the work and advice of our Lord's friends." Many difficulties and trials were, however, to come before the peace she hoped for was attained.

The fall of the Empire and the restoration of the Bourbons put an end to the exile of the Fathers of the Faith, and in June Father Varin was again at Amiens.

We have our good Father Varin here [Mother Barat wrote in June], but only for six days. He passes like a beneficent rain-cloud, whose showers refresh and fertilize the thirsty earth, but he does not stay long anywhere, so that many arid tracts, dried up by a blighting wind, may bring forth fruit, under the influence of this dew from Heaven.

He did what he could by visiting the convents of the Society, but his time was short. In the course of the summer the Society of Jesus was re-established by a Bull of Pius VII., and Father de Clorivière was named to receive those who wished to join. In August, 1814, Father Varin entered the novitiate at Paris, and almost all the Fathers of the Faith followed his example. The fall of the Empire also put an end to Monsieur de Saint-Estève's imprisonment, and he at once turned to account his recent disfavour, and ingratiated

himself so far with the new Government as to succeed in obtaining the post of secretary to Monsieur de Pressigny, the French ambassador in Rome. His new position gave him many opportunities of pursuing the course on which he had entered with regard to the Society, and he let none slip. He had scarcely arrived in Rome when he wrote to Father Varin expressing great joy at the Holy Father's recent Bull, and then continued :

When you have corrected the Rules send me the corrections because the Constitutions or Statutes will be submitted here to the proper authorities. The name of *Dames du Sacré-Cœur* will not be liked, except as a secondary title. *Apostolines* is preferred as a first and official name. The will of the Holy Father on this point must serve as our rule, and have force of law for us, especially if we want to spread by help of his approval. Tell the nuns that I hope to obtain a house in Rome for them. I have already set about the business and do not despair.

This letter was forwarded to Mother Barat who wrote thus to Monsieur de Saint-Estève :

We may then hope that through your means the Sovereign Pontiff will come to know of the little servants of our Lord, and that he will encourage their humble work by holding out the hope that he will one day approve our Institute. This thought is full of encouragement ; when such happiness is ours I shall willingly say my *Nunc dimittis*. Your work and our poor efforts will be crowned, and the day on which our Bull of Approbation reaches us, will assuredly be the happiest of our religious life.

But allow me, Reverend Father, to make one remark ; you have already submitted our Rules to examination, perhaps later on you will press for their approbation. Would it not be wise, before proceeding further, to wait until their final revision has taken place, and they have been accepted by the united Congregation of our Society ? For, especially since liberty has been restored to France, all the convents, except Amiens, which is less exacting, wish to have the Institute of the Society of Jesus adapted for women, as far as it can be done. According to this well-known intention, whilst taking the greater part of your very careful work, we shall have to arrange it in such a way as to approximate it more nearly to the order which St. Ignatius has

followed in his admirable Constitutions, and this is exactly what we are now engaged upon with your friend. As soon as this last edition has been finished and approved by the Society we will send it to you, and then you can present it for examination and for approbation, if God is so good as to grant us this special favour.

There is one other point on which it is important to remark, and that is with regard to the *name* we are to bear. You know, Reverend Father, that of *Dames du Sacré-Cœur* has been accepted by all, even with enthusiasm; it would be very difficult to get them to like any other. If, however, this may not be our official name, and we can only use it among ourselves, leave us that of *Dames de l'Instruction Chrétienne*, which we have, and which is already known, and do not give us that of *Apostolines* which, as many wise people say, will not be at all liked in France.

You understand, Father, that as it belongs to the Society to present its Constitutions to the Pope, so likewise it is for the Society to choose its name. If the Sovereign Pontiff does not like this name, the Society will take another. The question of the name will be treated of by the Congregation, as well as the whole matter of the Constitutions. The result will be forwarded to you, as we agreed by word of mouth before you left. There is much feeling at present about all this, and as all intended to join a Society offering them the Constitutions and Rules of St. Ignatius, there is no other way of re-establishing union and making a *whole* of the Society.

My most ardent wish, Reverend Father, is that you should finish your work by entering into our views, by supporting us, helping us by your lights, and the gifts God has bestowed upon you. How happy I should be if, on your return, the whole of our religious family once more united in mind, and supported by our most faithful and oldest friend, could work to perfect and extend the Society for the glory of God. This is the wish of my heart. If, as I expect from the mercy of our Divine Master and from your own goodness, He inspires you to enter into this view, then in our union we shall find strength against the attacks which the enemy of all good is always exciting against us.

But Monsieur de Saint-Estève was far too much impressed with the sense of his own importance, to weigh in a just balance the wise reasoning so calmly and so considerately laid before him. He had risen in the world, and hoped by means of influential friends, to carry the point on which his heart was

set, that of forcing his own rules on the Society, so as to appear its acknowledged head and founder. He hoped to crush all opposition, and carry matters with a high hand. He wrote in October to Father Varin urging him to set "Madame Sophie" in the right path, and withdraw her from the influence of some of her daughters who muddled every thing,—that he was expecting an answer from the French Court that would decide the steps he should take at the Vatican,—that he had waited ten years in vain for a definitive decision from Father Varin, and had therefore, six months since, addressed himself to St. Petersburg and to Fontainebleau,—that more recently he had consulted the Pope and the Cardinals by word of mouth,—that all was settled by common consent, and if God pleased there would be no more of the distressing instability which made it be said that these religious must have either a very bad Mother Superior or bad advisers,—that after fourteen years of uncertainty it seemed imperative to give them a centre of union for their safe guidance,—and that he trusted God would inspire Father Varin with the means of consolidating every thing. . . .

The meaning of all this was very clear, but Monsieur de Saint-Estève expressed himself even more clearly in writing to Father de Clorivière. His work had been found good, sufficient,—it was preferred to any other;—it was with him only that they wished to treat, he was looked on as the Superior of these religious. Nay, he went further, and said that through Father Varin's inertness in the past, and the impossibility of his acting for them at present,—on account of the incapacity of the Superior who was unable to govern,—on account also of the desire of the Holy Father and "your friends" to see them established everywhere, he had been chosen as absolute Superior to organize the Order in the course of a year, after which it would receive the solemn approbation of the Holy Father, and would have a house in Rome, several in Italy and in other countries, with the good-will and special protection of the Court of France. "Father Varin should," he continues, "tell the nuns to give me of their own

accord full powers, and to put their will into my hands with regard to this business; otherwise there will be a division . . . for which he alone will be responsible," &c., &c. A letter which he wrote about the same time to Mother Barat, answering her last letter of September 11th, as well as one not preserved which she seems to have written to him in July, sets forth the same line of argument, but in a more insidious form. After such experience, she lost all hope of convincing him by reason, or stopping his progress by marks of deference.

In November, Father Varin wrote to her as follows:

Pax Christi. The storm has burst that I have long watched gathering over your head, and, I may add, over my own. If you, for your share, have had one letter, I have had three, for mine, each outdoing the other. Once again, *courage and confidence.* Whoever asks for the Cross, and, like you, feels unable to live without it, must know that it reaches to the four quarters of the globe: north, south, east, and west. When we lie down on it with a good grace, we have but to stretch out our arms to know and love it in all its dimensions. Do not call upon me to share it with you; I am the first to receive it, and when I pass it on to you, I still find it whole and entire in my arms. May our good Master be blessed for ever for it!

I will end my letter by the two words with which I began: *Pax Christi* and *pax tecum.* We have but to reflect for one moment on the shortness of life and the length of eternity, to be able to look calmly and with an even mind on all the fluctuations of this present life. Let us then be in peace, because, moreover, all events are ordained by our Lord who will know how to turn them to His glory and our sanctification.

At the time Father de Clorivière was placed at the head of the Society of Jesus in France, he was an old man over eighty, very wary, very holy, and very wise. There was no fear of his being deceived by Monsieur de Saint-Estève. His only answer to the letter he received from him was to desire Father Varin to resume, in concert with Father Druilhet, his work of preparing the Constitutions, and to continue, as of old, to be Mother Barat's director. Then, for her own guidance, his feeble hands wrote the words: *Pray, suffer, wait, and hope,*

and he sent them to her with the assurance of his interest in her cause.

Mother Barat's cross did indeed, at that time, stretch in every direction, but by far her most poignant sorrow of this year was the state of the convent at Ghent. She could bear Monsieur de Saint-Estève's letters and proceedings as far as they were injurious or humiliating to herself personally, for this was her practice in all circumstances of the kind. Thus, writing in 1812, to Mother Emilie Giraud, she said: "It is delightful to work for God, to wish to do good to creatures, and receive from them only complaints and contempt. If, by my poor labours, I could merit to procure a little glory to God, and He deigned in return to give me graces, I would ask for that of being despised and forgotten by every one. But I am too imperfect to deserve this favour." Once, about the same time, when she received a letter expressing a harsh judgment of herself, the only remark she made was: "There must be at least one person to treat me as I deserve. Words like these hurt me less than praise." Throughout the eight years that this trial lasted, nothing was more striking than the complete absence in her of any mark of want of respect or of charity towards Monsieur de Saint-Estève; not one of her letters contains a word of accusation or complaint, his name does not even once occur in them.

But the troubles of the convent at Ghent affected her much more acutely. It is very easy to understand what effect Napoleon's treatment of their beloved Bishop had upon the people of Ghent. His imprisonment at Vincennes was hard, but this severity was succeeded by measures of still greater tyranny, and although the fall of the Empire restored the shepherd to his flock, it did not do away with the bad impression produced in Belgium generally, and at Ghent in particular, by the National Council of 1811. The French clergy were looked upon by the Belgian priests as tainted, at least, by Gallicanism, and their influence in education was dreaded. It was considered unfortunate that the convent at Dooresele was subject to a Superior General who lived in

France, and when Madame de Peñeranda, in her perplexity with regard to the Constitutions sent to her from Amiens, asked advice from the ecclesiastical authorities around her, the advice she received was not of a nature to calm her anxiety. So troubled was she, that her judgment failed in its usual soundness; she fancied that Gallican influence was at work, and that the exclusion of the spirit of St. Ignatius and of the Sacred Heart from the Constitutions was due to this cause. Had her mind been uninfluenced by fear, she would have turned for light and counsel to Mother Barat, and all would have been well, but she had to learn by bitter experience to know the course where safety lay. She kept from her Superior the anxieties that weighed upon her, and Mother Barat learnt them only as time showed their sad effects.

Father Varin visited Dooresele from Amiens, but although his announcement that the Society would bear publicly the name of the Sacred Heart was received with enthusiasm, his visit produced no lasting results. Mother Barat wrote several times in the course of the summer to Mother de Peñeranda, but her words were in vain. She would not alter her resolution to separate her house from the rest of the Society, and she refused Mother Barat's invitation to come and discuss the matter with her. When she found persuasion was hopeless, Mother Barat reminded her that the branch cut off from the tree cannot take root and soon withers, but warning had no more effect than advice, and early in December, by the decision of the Bishop, Dooresele was withdrawn from the Society. The Belgian nuns remained under Mother de Peñeranda; the French, after some hesitation, withdrew. It was a time of terrible trial, and Mother de Peñeranda herself was often seen weeping bitterly before the Blessed Sacrament. Far more bitter tears did she shed later on in expiation of her fault, until the day when, her school broken up and her community dispersed by Government, she turned in her humiliation to Mother Barat, and asked and obtained the favour of being received back amongst her children. But that happy day was still far distant.

It was in the dark and cold of a December night, that two travelling carriages stopped at the door of the Oratoire. The first contained three nuns of whom Mother Adrienne Michel was one. The second held three others and a child, Sophie Dusaussoy, Mother Barat's niece. Mother Barat was there to receive them, but her loving welcome was in silence. They asked and received her blessing, she attended to their wants, warmed them and brought them food, but said nothing except by the tears that flowed unchecked from her eyes. It was as if her heart were really broken. The next day she was very ill, and a violent fever followed. Her life was in imminent danger for twenty-one days, and the last sacraments were administered. When her brother, then at Bordeaux, was informed of her state, he wrote to beg that, in case the illness ended fatally, no other announcement might be sent to him than a blank sheet of paper with a black seal; he could not bear more. The danger was beginning to subside when Father Varin wrote to Mother Barat: "Illness, suffering, contradictions, to be deserted and betrayed by creatures, even those we love best, to be forsaken by God, deprived of all sensible help, beset with obstacles on every side, all this belongs to and befits those who consecrate themselves to the Heart of Jesus, to establish His Kingdom on earth. 'The servant is not greater than his Master.' Our Lord passed through all these trials, and yet, when they were drawing to a close, He said to His disciples: 'I have overcome the world.' Let us place all our confidence and hope in Him. His work cannot perish."

Slowly and gradually Mother Barat came back to life, but it was to meet fresh and even greater sorrow. When in the previous year, on her return to Amiens, she wrote that God's blessing was felt to be resting on the house, this was due no doubt to the virtues practised there by the community and novices, most of whom knew nothing of any division of minds and hearts. But during Mother Barat's illness this reserve had been broken through, to the great detriment of religious spirit. The recent arrival from Ghent was a revelation to

many, and those from Dooresele, on their side, found much that to them was new and strange in the life of their Sisters at Amiens. To add to this, Monsieur de Saint-Estève continued by letter to direct the steps of some of the community of Amiens, and the contents of his letters were not kept secret. The report was spread that he had established a convent in Rome destined to be the Mother-House of the Society. A pompous account of the opening was copied from a Roman newspaper; his house was said to be the only one recognized by the Holy Father; his rules were the only ones that had received approbation; he himself was alone acknowledged as director and organizer of the whole Society. Father Varin was completely set aside, and as the term of office for the Superior General was now limited to ten years, Mother Barat's deposition would take place in the ensuing year.

Division in the community now became manifest, and soon bore its inevitable fruit of sadness and mistrust. The hours when the religious met for recreation, after the toils of the day, were no longer marked by the simple gaiety that confidence alone can produce. Each dreaded to hear what the other might have to say, and as one of those who were present puts it, they were afraid even to meet one another's eyes, lest unwittingly they should seem to be asking for some details that would produce further distress in their mind.

In Mother Barat's weak state, Monsieur de Saint-Estève's letters were enough of themselves to prevent her recovery. The visits she received at this time from Father Sellier were her only consolation from without, and amongst the community Madame de Gramont d'Aster proved to be the most faithful and devoted of her children. Her experience and sound judgment were always at the service of her Superior.

As time went on, Mother Barat, though still unable to walk, was ordered to be as much as possible in the open air. The only vehicle at hand was one very pleasing to her humility, a kind of wheelbarrow in which she was wheeled about the garden of the Oratoire by one of the lay-sisters. Her love for poverty as well as for humility made her take pleasure in

this new kind of invalid chair, which was made more grotesque by a paper covering or hood, devised to protect her from the sun. The Sister, whose privilege it was to wheel her about, was a simple and holy soul, whose conversation did her as much good as the breath of spring.

However, in course of time, the doctor ordered change of air, and Cuignières was fixed upon. On July 21st, towards evening, the community of Amiens assembled in the garden outside her window, to take leave of her, and to offer her their good wishes for the morrow, for the feast of St. Mary Magdalen was the day of her departure. A nosegay of the sombre-coloured scabious, an emblem of sorrow, was offered to her, tied with a green ribbon to express the hope of her speedy return. But it was, at best, a melancholy parting, and the hearts of those present were full of conflicting feelings. How few amongst them were loyally devoted to her! How many looked forward to being now able to act with greater freedom! And Mother Barat herself, under no misconception as to the state of affairs, fixed her thoughts upon our Lord at the Pretorium, and united herself to Him and His sufferings, to be able to pass lovingly and bravely through those bitter hours.

It was as she could not but have foreseen. Soon after her departure, Madame Copina and Madame de Sambucy, the sister of Monsieur de Saint-Estève, left for Rome. Madame Baudemont, now at Poitiers, followed them later. Madame Eugénie de Gramont was saved from taking the same fatal step by the energy of her mother, who, on hearing of her intention, exclaimed: "Go, if you will go, but you will not go alone. I shall be there also to open your eyes."

It is a relief to turn from Amiens, at this time, to Cuignières, where Mother Barat found all she could wish in the spirit and tone of community and children. One, who was then in the school, writes:

We were so anxious for the arrival of our Mother General, that we set out walking with our mistresses to meet her on her road, but, whilst we were resting at a neighbouring village, she passed us without our seeing her. It was a dreadful disappointment! We hurried back,

and got to Cuignières about nightfall. There she was at her window, and she called out to us in her bright way: "Well, children, I got here first! I shall see you to-morrow. Good-night. Go to your supper, to bed, and sleep well!"

Delightful days followed. She used to ride on a donkey about the country, and often let us come with her; then we had picnics on the grass, but, in the midst of all our fun, our object was to lose nothing of what she said, all her words were so full of charm, so kind, so wise. These blessed days, which we spent like happy children round a beloved mother, were never forgotten.

The sights and sounds of the country in all its midsummer beauty, the company and talk of the children and of the simple country people whom she met in her rambles, the loyal and loving care of Mothers Desmarquest and Deshayes, the rustic simplicity and poverty of life at Cuignières, all had in them a power of helping Mother Barat to throw off the weight of sorrow and care that was crushing her. But none of these things were so effectual as the encouragement she met with from the holy Abbé de Lamarche. Deep in his heart was the conviction that had only strengthened with thirty years of trial—that religion was to return to France through the Sacred Heart. All that time he had been convinced that a Society called by its name was needed to effect "this miracle," the greatest, in his opinion, which God had ever worked in favour of that country. Whether Mother Barat's Society was or was not to be "the Society of the Sacred Heart" was therefore the crucial point in his eyes. Every thing seemed to him to show that such was God's intention with regard to it, and he dwelt in turn on each of the providential marks that throughout its short history established his opinion. In his austere and holy soul the light of truth shone with a clear steady flame, and, while lighting up the past, showed him also something of the future. It was with prophetic insight that he wrote to Mother Barat: "At the very time when the building is shaken to its foundation, and seems about to fall—at this very time, I repeat—God will manifest His wisdom and His goodness, that it may appear that this is no

work of man. All will be forced to say : 'The finger of God is there!'" With regard to Monsieur de Saint-Estève's foundation he declared that as it did not bear the name of the Sacred Heart it could not be destined to do great things in France.

Mother Barat had been about a month at Cuignières, and all these influences were beginning to restore her strength, when she received a letter which, for a time at least, put an end to all hopes of a favourable issue. It was an answer to one she had written about eight months previously to Father Panizzoni, Provincial of the Jesuits in Italy. The following is the substance of the letter. It was dated Rome, August 5th, 1815, and began by saying that, as Father Panizzoni was no longer Provincial, and moreover could neither read nor write French, the writer acted as his secretary, and wrote for him *pro bono publico*, for nothing short of the interests of religion would induce him otherwise to enter on so delicate a question. He then continued :

You beg Padre Panizzoni to dissuade Monsieur l'Abbé de Saint-Estève from his project. This cannot be done ; you must not attempt to stop the course of a good work of this kind, nor can you put obstacles in the way of its being carried out, by preventing your daughters from entering the Institute, which has just been approved by the Holy See. You incur *ipso facto*, you and your accomplices, the excommunication fulminated by the Council of Trent. The house in Rome is the only authorized house, and if you do not submit to the Holy See, if you refuse to give in your adhesion to its decisions, how can you hope for an approval, or even for toleration from the Pope ? To use his own words, he will *suppress you* to prevent scandal and division, a power which, even in France, no one denies him.

There was much more in the letter to the same effect, which it seems useless to reproduce at this distance of time. It ended in these words :

Your fate is in your hands. Your submission and deference to the Holy Father, and your adhesion to the convent in Rome will be pleasing to God, useful for the furtherance of union and peace, will edify your Sisters, and be liked by your friends. If you will forward

to me your act of adhesion, I will use it discreetly, and will undertake to transmit to you the reply of the first Superior of the convent in Rome, who cannot but be full of consideration towards you.

Signed : STEPHANELLI, Roman College, Rome.

At first sight, this letter seemed nothing short of a death-warrant, and such it appeared to Father Varin and Monsieur Montaigne, to whom Mother Barat lost no time in forwarding it. Monsieur Montaigne, in the interests of religion and charity, advised her to return to Amiens and withdraw her opposition to the adhesion of the community to the Roman foundation. She was ready for that or any other sacrifice required by duty. She sought God alone, and if the Holy See had spoken, the matter was at an end. But in her heart there was a confidence, that nothing could shake. She could not believe it possible, that the Society of the Sacred Heart was really to die. *Nisi granum frumenti* was the thought in her mind, and the very appearance of death seemed to her to speak of fresh life.

The Abbé Perreau, a priest of great experience, was consulted by the friends of the Society, and his view differed from that of Monsieur Montaigne. The very style of the letter signed "Stephanelli," gave him a clue to its authorship, and his advice was that, before any steps were taken, the writer should be required to produce authentic and incontrovertible testimony with regard to the new Institute, as well as proofs of the alleged approbation by the Holy See.

Mother Barat therefore came to Paris and wrote from there to "Stephanelli," refuting his allegations, and asking for documentary evidence on the two points indicated. Researches were made moreover at the Roman College, which at that time was not yet restored to the Jesuits, and no one was found bearing the name of the writer. Mother Barat was the last person to believe what, before long, was proved to be the fact, that "Stephanelli" was no other than Monsieur de Saint-Estève himself. But in the end, the fraud was brought to light, and with the discovery the whole intrigue fell to the ground. Although Mother Barat's delicate charity prevented her from

saying a word beyond what was absolutely necessary that the truth might prevail, others were not so reticent. Monsieur de Pressigny was effectually enlightened as to the proceedings of his secretary, and wrote soon afterwards to reassure the Society with regard to the alleged approval given by the Holy See to the Constitutions of Monsieur de Saint-Estève's convent in Rome. "Rome does not proceed so quickly," he said. "Congregations are *proved* before they are *approved*."

Monsieur de Saint-Estève was soon afterwards obliged to leave Rome, as he and his proceedings were disavowed by those who had hitherto lent him their countenance. He came back to Paris, but considerably lowered in public estimation. "Vaulting ambition" had, once more, "o'erleapt itself."

CHAPTER XIV

SECOND GENERAL CONGREGATION. 1815–1816.

> To live by law,
> Acting the law we live by without fear;
> And, because right is right, to follow right
> Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.
>
> TENNYSON.

AS the way was now clear, it was urgent to establish every thing on a permanent basis, and, for this purpose, Mother Barat assembled in Paris the Superiors of each of her houses, that they might, with her, examine the Constitutions drawn up by Fathers Varin and Druilhet, as a preliminary to adopting them.

The meetings were held at the convent of St. Thomas of Villanova in the Rue de Sèvres, where Madame de Gramont d'Aster had formerly lived, and in rooms still belonging to her. Each Superior was to bring her Assistant, and from Grenoble came Mothers Bigeu and Duchesne; from Cuignières, Mothers Desmarquest and Deshayes. Poitiers sent Mothers Grosier and de Charbonnel. Although the latter had spent all her religious life at Amiens except the last few months, loyalty was too much part of her very nature, to have allowed her to deviate from the fidelity of true allegiance to the head of the Society. It was quite in vain that Monsieur de Saint-Estève had written to her from Rome: "Come out to us, we want you here." Nothing moved her. Mother Geoffroy came from Niort with Mother Emilie Giraud, whose happiness was beyond words at finding herself once more with Mother Barat and Mother Duchesne. Lastly, from Amiens came Mother

Henriette Girard with Mother Eugenie de Gramont. The latter had indeed, more than once, wavered in the day of trial, but Mother Barat could make every allowance for her youth and inexperience, and hoped every thing from the effect of placing her in such an atmosphere of mature sanctity and transparent truth as that which would surround her during the meetings of the Congregation. The event fully justified her foresight.

The Conference was opened on the feast of All Saints, 1815, by a short discourse on devotion to the Sacred Heart, which Father de Clorivière preached in the chapel of the Jesuits' house in the Rue des Postes. Mother Barat presided at the meetings in the Rue de Sèvres, and Fathers Varin and Druilhet came to read and explain the Constitutions. Father Druilhet was all his life one of the most faithful friends of the Society.

The Constitutions, now under examination, had been entirely weeded of the additions made by Monsieur de Saint-Estève, and newly elaborated from the first plan and the fundamental basis of the Society. The work opened with a summary, or abridged plan of the Institute, which clearly set forth its aim and scope. The first words give the key to all that follows, and as they fell upon the ears of the Mothers who were listening, their hearts must have rejoiced in the assurance that all was well.

IN THE NAME AND FOR THE GLORY
OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY.

I. God, whose providence disposes all things with wisdom for the good of His Church, has given her at all times help proportioned to her wants, but it is especially in this latter age that He has manifested towards her His goodness and magnificence, by discovering to her the immense treasures of grace contained in the Heart of His Son. It was His will, by this means, not only to secure to this Divine Heart the worship of love and of adoration which is due to It by so many titles, but also to revive the light of faith and the sacred fire of charity, which was being extinguished in all hearts by impiety.

II. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is marked by characteristics which do not allow us to mistake therein the finger of

God; the rapidity with which it has spread throughout the whole Christian world, the eagerness of the faithful in embracing its holy practices, the zeal of the Sovereign Pontiffs and of the Bishops in favouring its progress, the fruits of grace, as solid as they are abundant which it has produced in all places, but chiefly in France, which was its cradle, and the nature of this devotion, so well calculated to touch the hearts of sinners and to renew the fervour of the just, all prove how agreeable it is to our Lord and that He Himself inspires it.

III. It is therefore to meet His designs, so clearly manifested in our age, that this little Society, formed under the authority of the Bishops, and with the desire and hope of obtaining the solemn approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff, is consecrated to the Divine Heart of Jesus and to the propagation of Its worship.

IV. The object of this Society is, therefore, to glorify the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by labouring for the salvation and perfection of its members through the imitation of the virtues of which this Divine Heart is the centre and the model, and by consecrating its members, as far as it is possible for persons of their sex, to the sanctification of others, as the work dearest to the Heart of Jesus. The Society proposes also to honour with particular devotion the most holy Heart of Mary, which was so perfectly conformed in every thing to the adorable Heart of Jesus, her Divine Son.

The Society of the Sacred Heart combines for its members the active life and the contemplative; the prayer of Mary and the labour of Martha. Enclosure is observed so far as it is compatible with the work undertaken. The religious do not go outside the convent, but there are no gratings within its walls. All is arranged to secure for them the seclusion so helpful to recollection, as well as the freedom necessary in their work.

In the Society of the Sacred Heart there are lay-sisters, as well as choir religious, that none may be deprived, for lack of education, of the benefit of embracing an Institute devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The lay-sisters are employed in household work, the choir religious say daily the Little Office of Our Blessed Lady, in choir, and are employed in the administration of the house, or in teaching, or study. The life of the lay-sisters reproduces that of our Lord at Nazareth,

the others carry on, in their measure and degree, the labours of His public ministry. Both, in the truest sense of the word, are *Sisters* of one family, as Martha was of Mary. All are bound by the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, but the choir nuns, at their Profession, make a fourth vow of consecrating themselves to the education of youth.

The Constitutions, properly so-called, treat of the organization of the Society. They are divided into four parts, and the first of these deals with the choice of suitable subjects.

The exterior qualifications looked for in one who wishes to enter the Society of the Sacred Heart, are not exorbitant. "Her family must be respectable, her own reputation unblemished, her appearance unobjectionable, and her health good." Her judgment must be sound, and her will pliable and docile; her education suited to her condition and to the end of the Society. If her education is defective she must at least have capacity and good-will to make up what is wanting.

As regards her vocation, she should have an upright and pure intention of glorifying the Sacred Heart of Jesus by working for her own perfection and for the sanctification of others, a generous desire and firm resolution to give herself entirely to God in all obedience and simplicity. This is the important point, and on this her admission depends.

The second part of the Constitutions treats of the various degrees through which the members of the Society pass successively from postulantship to Profession, and beyond, to the life they lead as professed, until the day when death unites them to the Spouse of their souls.

The first of these degrees or grades is the postulantship. When the two first disciples of our Blessed Lord followed Him on the banks of the Jordan, He asked them: "What seek you?" and they answered by another question: "Master, where dwellest Thou?" He saith to them: "Come and see." * The postulantship, which lasts three months for the choir religious, and six months for lay-sisters, corresponds in some degree to this invitation. During this time the postulant has

* St. John i. 38, 39.

two things to do, she must *see*, and must *let herself be seen*. 1. She must see. She is quite free, she wears the same dress as that she wore in the world, but she must make trial of the life she thinks of leading, the duties to which she wishes to devote herself; she must test her power of bearing the yoke of Christ before she takes it upon her. 2. She must let herself be seen, making known her heart and mind to the Superior, her conscience to her confessor, and her soul to God by prayer.

Her aptitudes for the life of the Society are judged of in the light of God by experienced eyes, and the question of her admittance to the noviceship will be decided by the Superior General in accordance with the report sent in by three amongst the professed.

The noviceship proper begins on the day of clothing. On this day the postulant is led, as a bride, to the altar, where the priest, after blessing the religious habit, emblematic in the words of the liturgy of "humility and contempt of the world," places on her head the white veil of the novice, saying as he does so: *Receive the yoke of the Lord, for His yoke is sweet and His burden light.* He then blesses her, and prays that she may "grow in holiness and charity, and that all her petitions may be amply fulfilled in time and in eternity." Mass follows at which she receives Holy Communion.

The noviceship lasts two years; during that time the novices are still free, and have leisure to "taste and see how sweet is the Lord." Their Rule says: "Their most sacred duty, and most sweet occupation is to contemplate, study, and know intimately the interior dispositions of the Sacred Heart with regard to Obedience, Poverty, and Chastity, in order to conform and unite themselves closely to them."

They begin by studying It in Its teaching, and the Rule places foremost among their exercises, instructions on the practice of religious virtues, or on the truths and obligations of the Catholic religion. They study It also in the Blessed Sacrament, and therefore in the house of noviceship there is, as far as possible, perpetual adoration.

But it is especially by imitation that the Sacred Heart is to be glorified, and as the novices are called to consecrate themselves to It by the three vows of Obedience, Poverty, and Chastity, they must principally endeavour to make daily progress in these three virtues. They must endeavour to reproduce in themselves the obedience of Him Who came amongst men not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and Who made Himself obedient even to the Death of the Cross. They must learn from Him to obey in all things with alacrity, with simplicity, with joy, with love, readily sacrificing their likes and dislikes, their judgment and will.

They must imitate Him also in their love for Poverty, which was so dear to His Sacred Heart that He chose to be born, to live, and die therein. They must cherish it as their mother, and rejoice to feel its effects sometimes in their food, their rest, their lodging and clothing. Although the novices retain the ownership of their goods, they must renounce all affection for worldly possessions, and practise that dependent poverty to which they will later on be bound. As to Chastity, they must strive to imitate the purity of the Heart of Jesus Himself, who out of love for this virtue willed to be born of a Virgin Mother, and gave her at His Death, to the care of His virgin disciple. Thus by Obedience they relinquish their own will, by Poverty they separate themselves from the goods of the world, by Chastity they renounce all natural ties and pleasures, and embrace a life of mortification.

The Constitutions speak in the same way of meekness, humility, charity, and simplicity. With regard to all these virtues the Heart of Jesus should be before their eyes as an open book in which they study how to esteem, and how to practise them. They must also in all their actions, even in those that are most common and ordinary, cast their eyes on the Sacred Heart of Jesus to seek the dispositions and interior spirit in which they should be performed; for He deigned to become our model in all things; "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God," * says

* 1 Cor. x. 31.

St. Paul, "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." "For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus." † The edifice of sanctity built up by the Rule of the Society of the Sacred Heart rests on this foundation. It is the embodiment of the teaching of the Apostle who said of himself: "For to me, to live is Christ." ‡ The knowledge of the Sacred Heart, the imitation of the Sacred Heart, the love of the Sacred Heart is the knowledge, and imitation of all that is deepest in the "unsearchable riches of Christ," § and in these depths the Rule of the Society would have its members seek the secret of the transformation which made St. Paul able to say: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." ‖ For "to love is to be transformed into the likeness of what we love, and to love God is to be transformed into Him." ¶ The Society is then wholly consecrated to the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, but as the honour of the Mother enhances that of the Son, from which it flows, it is consecrated also to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and devotes itself to the spread of this devotion. The Office of the Blessed Virgin, said every day in choir, is a tribute of praise to be lovingly offered to the Queen of Virgins, whose heart is, for all her children, that of the tenderest of Mothers. From her childhood in the Temple, and onward through her life at Nazareth, our Blessed Lady is a model which the novices should always have before their eyes, that from watching her they may learn to imitate the virtues that made her heart so like that of her Divine Son.

At the end of two years the novice may be admitted by the Superior General to her First Vows. Such is the name which the Rule gives to the simple vows of Obedience, Poverty, and Chastity, which though simple are not taken for a time, but for ever. She is examined for this by the Bishop, or his delegate, and on the appointed day, after publicly avowing that it is of her own free-will that she leaves the world, she pronounces the formula of vows, "in the presence of the most

* Coloss. iii. 17. † 1 Cor. iii. 11. ‡ Philipp. i. 21. § Ephes. iii. 8.
‖ Galat. ii. 20, ¶ St. John of the Cross.

Holy Trinity, of the ever Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, of all the Heavenly Court, and of all who are here witnesses." Her white veil is then changed for a black one, and the priest puts into her hand a crucifix, bidding her: "Receive this cross which bears the image of our crucified Lord, who must henceforth be your model, and the sole object of your love."

Bound thus to the Society, the Rule says, she must receive with holy indifference and perfect abandonment to the will of God her destination for any house in which the Superior General thinks fit to place her. With regard to the work awaiting her, if she is allowed to have a preference it will be for teaching the poor, "the cherished portion of the flock of Jesus Christ, who was pleased to be born, to live and die in poverty." As to the lay-sisters, their state is all the more to be prized, and should be all the dearer to them because, as it is humble, laborious, and obscure, it makes them more like Jesus Christ, their Spouse, who chose to pass the first thirty years of His life in obscurity and labour.

The religious who has made her First Vows is called, in the Society, an aspirant, and this state of aspirantship lasts for five years. She is bound to the Society, but the Society has not pledged itself irrevocably to her. If the glory of God required it, she could be released from her vows any time before her Profession. The five years of aspirantship are looked on as a continuation of the noviceship, as far as this can be combined with teaching or study. Twice a year the aspirants make a retreat, and renew their vows in public. According to the Constitutions "they must regard each step in religious life as a step further towards that perfection at which they must aim until their last breath."

When the five years have elapsed, the Superior General names those who are to be admitted to make their Profession. In preparation for this step they enter upon a second noviceship, called *probation*, and lasting for six months. During this time they neither teach nor study, but their time is occupied by spiritual exercises and the practice of the interior life. The last month is spent in retreat.

Yet probation is not a time of rest. When it was once spoken of as such in Mother Barat's presence: "No such thing," she exclaimed, "probation is the farmer's winter-time. The ground lies fallow during the hard weather, but the seed has been sown, and the harvest is being prepared. The grain is passing through great changes underground, and *die it must*; it yields the hundred-fold only at that price."

The day of Profession is the most solemn in the life of a religious. "Do you consent," the priest asks her, "to take Jesus Christ crucified for your Spouse?" And when she has answered that she consents with all her heart, the priest says: "Receive then this ring as the sign of the eternal alliance you are about to contract with Him," and whilst the Superior places the ring on the finger of the aspirant, the priest adds: "May this ring be the sign of your fidelity, the seal of the Holy Spirit, that being called the spouse of Christ you may faithfully and diligently serve Him." In the same way the priest gives the silver cross saying: "Receive, my child, this precious pledge of the love of Jesus Christ, and remember now you have become His spouse, you are bound to live henceforth in conformity and union with His Divine Heart."

The initial letters of the words: *Cor unum et anima una in Corde Jesu* ("One heart and one soul in the Heart of Jesus") are engraved upon the cross, and whilst the Superior ties its cord around her neck, the celebrant adds these words from the Canticle of Canticles: "May your Beloved be to you a bundle of myrrh, and rest on your heart as a pledge of love and eternal union. Amen."

By Profession the religious binds herself for ever to the Society, and the Society irrevocably adopts her, and engages to keep her for life and until death. This solemn contract, confirmed by the vow of Stability, which was subsequently added to it, can be dissevered by no power on earth but that of the Pope.

The professed religious are bidden by the Constitutions to remember that they are now more strictly bound than ever to tend to perfection, since they have just pledged themselves to

it so solemnly before Heaven and earth, and as this perfection rests upon the three vows, they must endeavour now to excel in the practice of them. Indeed their virtue should so far exceed that of novices, as a person running along the road to perfection outstrips one who is seeking it.

Their perfection is to be on the same lines as heretofore, but with firmer foundations, and therefore greater strength. They are bidden never to forget that they should be deeply rooted in humility and charity. The nobler their work is in the light of faith, the lower they should sink in their own esteem, and in this deep sense of their own lowliness and nothingness they must be ready at all times to accept contempt and humiliations, no matter whence they come. They must be glad if what is poorest and worst falls to their lot, or if they are treated as the last in the house, "drawing this holy joy from the Heart of Jesus, who out of love for them chose to be treated as the last of men, and the outcast of His people." "Thus faithful to the grace of their vocation they will advance more and more in the way of perfection, and prepare themselves for the eternal union with their Divine Spouse."

In the suffering and humiliation of illness, the religious of the Sacred Heart is reminded of the opportunities offered her for uniting herself to our Lord by the practice of patience, mortification, and abandonment to His will. She must look on it therefore as a very precious time, striving to reproduce in herself the submissiveness of Jesus Christ who was obedient even to the Death of the Cross. At the approach of death she is bidden to remember that she has "devoted and consecrated herself to God as a victim in union with the Heart of the Saviour of men, who offered Himself to His Father as a Victim for all mankind." By uniting her acceptance with His, she must try to lose nothing of the value of this final sacrifice, and must humbly repeat His words upon the Cross: *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum.* At this moment she will reap the fruit of the holy habit she has contracted during life of uniting all her actions to the Divine Heart of Jesus. What greater consolation than at

the moment of death to give up one's soul to God in union with the Heart of His Divine Son!

The third part of the Constitutions treats of the means employed by the Society of labouring for the sanctification of souls. The chief of these means is education, but as this subject was not thoroughly worked out until a later period of Mother Barat's life, it will be better to leave it till then.

The fourth and last part of the Constitutions concerns the government of the Society, and the Congregation of 1816 finished its labours by deciding the important questions that arose with regard to it. The first and most important was the duration of the office of the Superior General. There was no doubt as to Mother Barat's desires. Now, more than ever, did she long for retirement, but it was not to be granted to her prayer. She was to remain upon the Cross *to the end*. It was at once decided by the Congregation that the office of the Superior General is "for life." She is set in her position, the Constitutions say, to govern the whole Society, and therefore should be closely united to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, since it is from this centre of all good that she must always derive the light and the graces that she needs for herself, and that she should draw down upon all the members of the Society. Hence, while enforcing the practice of obedience, she shall be careful so to temper her firmness with humility, meekness, and charity, that the spirit and Heart of Jesus, "meek and humble of Heart," may always be felt in her. She is "Superior" and "Mother," but "Mother" above all.

The Superior General has great authority in the Society, for its whole government is in her hands. She admits all the members to postulantship, noviceship, vows, and Profession; all new houses are founded by her; she names all the Superiors and other officials; she has authority over all the property of the Society, and directs its administration. She watches over the faithful observance of the Constitutions and Rules, and it belongs to her to convoke the General Congregation. The Rule desires that intimate and numerous ties should exist

not only between the whole body of the Society and its centre, but between that centre and each of the members. Every one is therefore free to write directly to the Superior General.

Such a weight of responsibility and such an overwhelming burden of work make help necessary. The Rule has foreseen this, and provides the Superior General with a permanent Council, elected by the Society, and composed of three Assistants General, or four, if necessary. The Constitutions also provide her with a Procuratrix, a Secretary, and an Admonitrix who shall be at hand to make such observations and give her such advice as may seem for the good of the Society or her own perfection.

After arranging a similar system for carrying on the government of the convents of the Society, the Constitutions point out the means of preserving the whole body in the spirit of its Institute.

The first of these means is the General Congregation, which shall be convoked every six years to treat of the affairs of the Society. The other means are : (1) exact observance of the Rules and Constitutions, especially those which enjoin the spirit of prayer and interior life, self-renunciation and obedience, zeal and charity ; (2) union of minds and hearts ; (3) the love of all for the Divine Heart of Jesus, which really includes the foregoing. The Statutes of the Society therefore end where they began. The Sacred Heart is all in all, and the last sentence sums up every thing, by recalling the words of the prayer which our Lord made for His disciples on the eve of His Passion : "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee . . . that they may be made perfect in one." *

"Such was originally," says Mgr Baunard,† "and such is still this system of government which was destined to rule over so great a number of souls, a system full of strength, energy, and tenderness, of Divine wisdom, and of knowledge of human nature, a system in which the Heart of God and the heart of man are brought into such close and sacred relations. Drawn in great measure from the spirit of St. Ignatius, but still more

* St. John, xvii. 21, 23. † *Histoire de la Vénérable Madeleine-Sophie Barat*, vol. I., p. 291.

from the teachings of the Gospel, its austere enthusiasm is combined with a spirit of moderation and practical prudence which guarantees the exercise of reason under the supreme guidance of grace. Narrow views, petty details are as foreign to it as high-flown sentiment. It is severe in principle, yet appears easy and sweet because the severity is rather for the soul than for the body, and because love always sweetens the cross which it offers."

Cardinal Recanati said later on : " It has been my duty to read the Constitutions of almost all religious Orders, whether ancient or modern. All are admirable, full of beauty, and bear the stamp of God ; but those of the Sacred Heart seemed to me to excel all, because they contain the essence of religious perfection, and are at the same time a masterpiece of unity. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is at once the pivot on which all turns, and the goal to which all tends."

The key-note of the spirit of the Constitutions is identical with that which, at the very beginning, was adopted by Mother Barat and her first companions as the characteristic of the Society, the spirit of generosity : to give all for all, to refuse no sacrifice. to cling to nothing but God, to keep nothing back. What else but generosity could be the true spirit of those whose lives are to be devoted to the imitation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to the salvation of the souls for whom He died ?

When the business of the Council was arranged, Mother Barat proposed that the Mothers should make a novena to the Sacred Heart and to our Blessed Lady, in preparation for the elections, which were now to take place. The 15th of December was the appointed day, and the votes gave Mother Barat as her Assistants General, Mothers Bigeu, de Charbonnel, and Grosier. Mothers Desmarquest, Geoffroy, and Eugénie de Gramont were elected members of the General Congregation. Mother Bigeu was moreover elected Admonitrix to Mother Barat ; Mother de Charbonnel, Procuratrix General, and Mother Duchesne, Secretary General.

The following day, the Mothers went to the chapel of the

Recolletines in the Rue de Grenelle, and there, after a short discourse by the Abbé Perreau, Mass was celebrated. At the moment of Communion all went to the altar-rails, bearing lighted candles, and renewed their vows as is the custom at present. "The day was spent," Mother Duchesne writes, "in holy joy."

Two days later Mother Barat addressed a long circular letter to the houses of the Society. She began by expressing her gratitude to God for having enabled the Congregation to attain its end by re-establishing unanimity. She then went on to say, that letters from Rome had made it quite clear that the house established there had received no approbation that could constitute it a religious Congregation, and that it was not the same Institute as theirs. That even were it otherwise exactly the same, there was a fundamental difference in that "our Society" is essentially based upon devotion to the Sacred Heart. After dwelling on the spirit of the Constitutions, she says that they were unanimously adopted by the Congregation, and that on the day after the octave of the Immaculate Conception, all the Mothers renewed their vows with the fullest confidence and joy. She told them also that the Grand Almoner of France, Cardinal de Talleyrand-Périgord, had accepted the title of Superior General of the Society, and had deputed the Abbé Perreau as his delegate.

One very important matter still remained. The crisis through which the Society had just passed showed Mother Barat the necessity of a general noviceship, and the time seemed now come for realizing the project. She proposed the plan to the Mothers, and they entered into it warmly. The search for a suitable house was begun immediately, and they chose one in the Rue des Postes. It was small, but could be enlarged, and it was the best that offered at the time. Mother Duchesne was to stay in Paris to arrange the house for its new destination.

When all was settled, the other Mothers returned to the houses whence they had come. At Grenoble, Niort, Poitiers, and Cuignières the Constitutions were accepted with heartfelt

joy and gratitude. It was doubtful how they would be accepted at Amiens, and it was not without anxiety that Mother Barat went there on January 23rd. Soon after her arrival she presented the Constitutions to the Bishop, and obtained his cordial approbation for them, but her work within the convent was neither so quickly nor so easily done.

In the community at that time there were many conflicting feelings, and every shade of opinion with regard to recent events. It would be as vain to hope for union of views from these discordant minds, as for harmony from strings tuned to a different pitch. Mother Barat therefore put off speaking to them all together on the subject which had brought her amongst them, but she saw them all in private, and by degrees her conversation and her example, her humility and deference had their usual effect in winning all to submission and obedience. When she thought they were sufficiently prepared, she called them all together for a Conference, in which, after merely a passing allusion to the irregularity into which they had been led, she dwelt at great length on the many signs of His affection for the Society, which our Lord had been pleased to bestow on it. She then began to read the Constitutions, and continued to do so on the following days until they were finished. She interrupted the reading every now and then to give explanations or make comments of her own.

Each day as she read and spoke, the hearts of all were more and more drawn to love the spirit made manifest to them in the Constitutions. Sorrow for the past took possession of them, and each one deplored to Mother Barat in private, her own share in the defection of the community. By the time the reading of the Constitutions was finished every one was willing to adhere to them, and in the middle of February they came into force in the convent.

When things were taking this happy turn, Monsieur de Lamarche wrote, that those amongst Mother Barat's daughters who had found most difficulty in yielding would probably be those who would give most satisfaction to the Sacred Heart, and his prediction was soon verified. Towards the end of

February, the community went into retreat as a preparation for renewing their vows, but Mother Barat continued to give a Conference every day. On the second day she was just rising from her chair, when one of the eldest of the community fell on her knees, and her example was followed by all the rest. "Oh, Reverend Mother," she exclaimed in a voice broken by sobs, "you are our true Mother. We acknowledge you as such. Will you not also acknowledge us as your true children?" and all around echoed the same protest and the same petition, whilst their tears showed how heartfelt was their sorrow. Mother Barat was deeply moved. "God knows," she said, "I never ceased to love you dearly." "But what a sorrow we have been to you, and how much we have made you suffer!" were the words that came spontaneously to their lips. It was too true, but that sorrow was now changed into joy. Mother Barat raised them up. "Come," she said, "I see we must give one another the kiss of peace," and, smiling through her tears, she clasped each one in her arms, and then quickly went to the chapel to pour out her thanksgivings before the Blessed Sacrament.

Happiness returned from that day to the community. On the 29th of February, the new habit was taken by all, and the professed received the cross and ring. Mother Barat received hers from Mother Eugénie de Gramont, the Assistant, and then gave them to all the rest.

Oh, eldest daughters of the Sacred Heart [wrote Monsieur de Lamarche at this time], how great is your vocation, but how great also are your obligations, how strictly you are bound to love and to teach others to love a God who has been so generous to you.

He rejoiced, as all the friends of the Society did, at this happy end to division and distrust. Monsieur Perreau wrote to Mother Barat:

Henceforth you will have but one heart and one soul to glorify God through the Sacred Heart of Jesus. What a happiness for you who had no other wish. This great grace is due, no doubt, to your devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as well as to your

purity of intention, simplicity, and obedience. When we are willing to die to all, to live to Jesus Christ alone, and to seek Him only, we are sure to find Him.

It was indeed the realization of all Mother Barat's hopes, but she was far from attributing the happy result to her own action. She wrote from Amiens at this time to Mother Adrienne Michel:

God does His work by drawing souls to Him. As usual, I have but to let Him act, and He will bring good out of evil. No doubt it was to give His grace freer scope that He chose so poor an instrument, and one so incapable, and without natural or acquired talents. Perhaps it would have been too much of a struggle for me to give up my own plans. I should have wanted to do things in my own way, and our Lord wished that this should be none of man's handiwork.

Although the conviction expressed in these lines had complete possession of her mind, Mother Barat worked as if all depended on herself and her activity. Before she left Amiens she set every thing on a different footing, and, with Mother Eugénie de Gramont at her side, had raised the standard of the studies, and set the accounts in order, to say nothing of the far more important task of re-establishing religious spirit in the community; and all this labour was in the midst of much inward as well as outward trial. Only one thing was wanting, and yet Mother Barat could scarcely have dreamt of expecting such a joy as she experienced when it came. Pope Pius VII. wrote on June 15th, 1816, a letter to the canons of Poitiers congratulating them "on having in the diocese two convents of the Sacred Heart, which worked with so much fruit for the education of girls." His Holiness expressed his regret at the error which had caused trouble and temporary disunion, and concluded by expressing the hope "that no further obstacle would arise, to prevent the religious from serving God in peace, and forming the hearts of children to virtue and piety."

CHAPTER XV

NEW LIFE. 1815–1816.

For which way soever the soul of man turneth itself, it lights upon sorrow, excepting only when it turns to Thee. — ST. AUGUSTINE.

WHATEVER were the trials which awaited Mother Barat in the future — and every year of her long life brought its tribute of suffering to her crown — the ground was now firm beneath her feet, as it had never been before. Hitherto all had been tentative. The only thing really fixed in the government of the Society had been her own immovable adherence to the principles whence it had sprung, her own rooted fidelity to the Sacred Heart. Its safety lay till then in her firmness, in her discernment, in her moderation, in a word, in her genius and in her sanctity. The great qualities of heart and soul which Father Varin and the wisest of her daughters had discovered in her from the first were now manifest.

Father Sellier, who saw her often during the crisis, did not fear to assert that St. Teresa had not suffered, in the course of her foundations, as Mother Barat did during the eight years from 1808 to 1815. But trials only brought out into full relief the strength of her character. They proved in how high a degree she possessed the power of endurance that made her so fit to rule, because it implied the power of accepting without loss of courage, patience, or charity, not only the ordinary burden of government, but extraordinary trials brought on her by those who owed every thing to her. They tested the depth of her humility and that marvellous self-

contempt which corresponded with her love of God, and grew out of her clear view of His purity. They tested the habitual union of her soul with God, and showed how impenetrable was the supernatural armour in which it clothed her. At the time of her election as Superior General, Mother Deshayes had noted down the reasons which led her and others to vote for her election, and experience had amply endorsed them. "Mother Barat's close union with God," she wrote, "her gentleness, prudence, entire devotion to the Society, the tried wisdom of her government, the talents she evinced at an age when others have but promise for the future, led us to believe that God had raised her up in His love to direct our little family. She alone thought otherwise, and held, in her deep humility, that He had established her in authority in punishment for her sins."

But the framing of the Constitutions and their acceptance by the Society placed the future on a different basis from the past. The time for search was over. Mother Barat had now fixed Rules and a complete organization to fall back upon for support, and though she would be more thoroughly than ever the main-spring of action, she would be able now to govern a body truly one in spirit, aim, and life. These improved conditions soon brought forth fruit. For seven years before 1816, there had been no foundations, but six new houses of the Society were founded in the four years that intervened between the Second Congregation and the Third, held in 1820.

Early in 1816, the foundation at Cuignières was transferred to Beauvais, and Mother Barat went, on the feast of St. Joseph, 1816, to assist at the ceremony of inauguration of the new convent in a building hitherto used as a diocesan seminary. This change was due to the admiration felt by many influential people who had witnessed the results effected by Mother Desmarquest, and her heroic struggle against difficulties. By the end of the year, there were eighty children in the boarding school, and three hundred in the poor school of the convent. Soon afterwards, another school was

started, in which four hundred children were taught various industries. This success always seemed to Mother Barat to explain why God had allowed the foundation at Cuignières. "There was no common-sense in it," she said once, "but it was the seed of the convent of Beauvais, which is one of our houses that has done most good. I look on the blessings that God has showered upon Beauvais as the fruit of the sufferings gone through by the little community at Cuignières."

On leaving Amiens, she went to Niort, where she found the community, no longer in the blind alley, but in one of the houses remarked upon by the Vicar General from Poitiers to Mother Barat, at their first entrance into the town, seven years before. The schools were full of children, and Mother Geoffroy had founded an orphanage at a village called Sainte-Pezenne, near Niort. This orphanage was, however, a heavy expense, and crippled Mother Geoffroy's resources. Mother Barat would have suppressed it if a device of Mother Geoffroy's had not, a second time, stayed the execution of her resolve. This time, Mother Geoffroy let the children unconsciously plead their own cause, under the form of a pastoral allegory and fable recited before Mother Barat, who always found children nearly irresistible. She fell into the trap innocently spread for her, and the day of doom for Sainte-Pezenne was postponed for eight years.

After a short stay at Poitiers, Mother Barat went on to Paris, where she found the house in the Rue des Postes brought into habitable condition, chiefly by the labour of Mother Duchesne, who had been acting as painter, glazier, white-washer, and even mason. For a month past, Mothers Duchesne and Bigeu had been living there, and a small community was soon formed, and recruited, after a little while, by the arrival of novices from Grenoble and Amiens. On the 15th of July, Monsieur Perreau came to bless the chapel, and say Mass. The house was very small and quiet. Nothing could be more in accordance with the simplicity of the spirit of the Sacred Heart than was every circumstance connected with this foundation.

On September the 14th, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Emilie Giraud :

You are hard at work, my child, on your part, and we on ours, for the service of the Sacred Heart. Alas ! we are still novices in the science of the Cross, and yet it is through suffering that our Lord's work is done ; hence we are only *gagne-petit*. When shall we have induced Him by our fidelity to entrust us with many souls ! Let us meet suffering with joy, as soldiers storm a breach, buoyant with valour, and radiant with hope of victory. When shall we love the Cross ! It must not be for nothing that *Spes unica* is our motto. The Stations were solemnly erected this morning in our chapel. Our little noviceship is beginning to grow, but it takes years to form a spouse of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These poor children are full of promise, but nothing more as yet. Pray that our Lord may send us some who have entered long since on the path of perfection, and whom we can employ in active work when they make their vows.

Pray for this new noviceship [she said again a little later to the same], you are interested in its success, for rivulets will flow from it that will water some of your plants.

The chapel of the Rue des Postes, one of the first in Paris consecrated to the Sacred Heart, soon became a favourite sanctuary for the devout, and was frequented by many who were illustrious both in the world and in the Church. All who came there saw and spoke with Mother Barat, and were deeply struck and edified by her. For her the foundation in Paris was the beginning of a new trial, that of contact with the great world. It was accepted as part of her cross, but in her letters at this time there is a ring of desolation and of suffering that comes from the sense of solitude in the midst of numbers.

You feel perhaps too much the weight of your charge [she wrote to Mother Thérèse Maillucheau, then at Grenoble], beware of imitating me. I feel it as you do, and others suffer from my sadness. I am not gentle enough, nor patient enough. It is very wrong. Every one ought to carry her little burden. I have lost my brightness, and I act as a wet blanket on the recreations. I hoped to have mended my ways in my stay with you, but our Lord intends to correct me with the rod, and not reward me. Good-bye, dear Thérèse, this is a little outpouring I have had with you, for there is scarcely any one I can speak to of these troubles.

In another letter she says :

I cannot forget that the happiest hours of my life, are those we spent together. But how long ago that seems ! Thabor, then, was joined to Calvary, now all our paths are on the latter mountain. I think we must make up our minds to die upon it. I see only the naked Cross. I have no wish to scold you but to encourage you, by showing you that you are not alone on the path of suffering. I am convinced it is the only road for the spouses of the Sacred Heart. Ah, it is much the best if we only knew the gift of God ! Let us work at growing humble and patient. I should never have thought this last virtue was so hard to gain. I assure you Superiors require a good supply of it.

But when suffering pressed hard, it only turned her will more strongly towards God :

May His will be done in all that concerns His little servant [she wrote]. A life without what we care for is the best. For a long time, and more especially lately, our Lord has given me a deep conviction that such is His good pleasure.

Solitude of the heart is good, though it is often painful. If in a solitary heart our Lord does not yet reign as Master at least the place is empty, and if we go on freeing ourselves from creatures He will soon come and fill the void with His immensity.

Again she wrote to Mother Thérèse :

What suffering these poor hearts of ours must go through until they rest in God alone. . . . As I look around me on creatures I often feel inclined to say with a great saint of the last century : "No, you are not my God." When I am listening with great pleasure to the eloquence of some learned and gifted preacher, I am soon obliged to look up higher and say : "No, you are not my God !" If I am talking to some holy person, I bless God who has sent into this soul a tiny streamlet from His own infinite perfections : but again, I say : "You are not my God." But what is He, this God towards whom my soul would fain spring forth, yet whom I cannot reach, this God for whom I was made ? . . . Ah, my God is a hidden God. There we must stop, my child, we will talk of our hidden God, our unknown God, when we meet. What a treatise an interior and loving soul might write on this subject. I feel something but cannot express it. He is still a hidden God for me.

Do you remember our longing for a life of solitude far from the world? It was a happy dream, but it had to be sacrificed. Doubtless it was not God's will. It still costs me a pang to give it up, perhaps for ever. It is so difficult to keep one's heart for God alone, when in the midst of many people. Yet this is what God asks of us.

How often [she wrote to Mother Duchesne], do my thoughts carry me back to the happy days we spent together on that peaceful mountain. We were seldom interrupted by visits, and my refusal to see some of the few people who came, was the only cloud that rose between us. God punishes me for it now by requiring from me a hundred-fold what I refused. God [she said to another] wants us in this city where we wish least to be. Let us accept our exile, stay there peacefully, and think but of maintaining our union with Him who will be our eternal possession.

Several foundations were asked for in the course of the year. Amongst other proposals made to her was one to undertake the direction of the royal establishment of St. Denis. But she feared that the arrangement would hamper the Society in its freedom of action, and she refused. She accepted however a foundation at Quimper, and sent Mother Bigeu there early in March, 1817, with a colony of professed nuns and novices from the Paris novitiate. The journey took twelve days. Mdlle de Saint-Pern who had given the house to the Society of the Sacred Heart, entered the noviceship, though she was no longer young. Of her Mother Barat wrote:

She is past fifty, but she edifies us all by her great humility and obedience. The Lord of the Vineyard calls His labourers at any time, and I am sure this good lady deserves her penny as much and more than many who, like your Mother, have borne "the burden of the day and the heats."

Shortly afterwards Madame de Gramont d'Aster was sent as Superior to Quimper.

The noviceship and school at the Rue des Postes increased rapidly, and occupied all the time that Mother Barat could spare from her other occupations. Father Varin, having finished his noviceship in July, 1816, often came to give instructions to the novices of the Society of the Sacred Heart that helped very materially towards their formation. On New

Year's Day, 1817, he held up to them the obedience of our Lord to His Father as the model of religious obedience, and finished by a sentence which became henceforth the watchword for sacrifice in the Society. "*Ita, Pater* was the answer of our Lord to His Eternal Father when He came to redeem the world. *Ita, Pater* must be our answer to every call that obedience makes upon us, and our answer also to the final call, God's voice that one day will bid us pass from time into eternity."

The school was no less flourishing than the noviceship, and the children belonged in general to the highest class of society. As this was so at the outset, it was easy to foresee the special career of usefulness that lay before the Paris school, and Mother Barat was anxious to place at its head, a mistress in whom the parents would have every confidence. Mother Eugénie de Gramont was eminently fitted to do a great work in such a position, and she was sent for from Amiens to take charge of the Paris school. The indefatigable labours that closed when thirty years later death overtook her at her post, bore lasting fruit in countless hearts. What she became and what her work was we shall see fully as time goes on, but what she was when she arrived from Amiens in Paris, we can catch a glimpse of from a few words written by Mother Duchesne. "Mother Eugénie edifies us all very much by her regularity and humility. She makes no more of herself than the last of the novices, takes the worst of every thing, works in the laundry, and teaches *b, a, ba* to the infants as earnestly as if she were ruling a large household."

Mother Barat had a great gift of insight, and she had soon fathomed the weak as well as the strong side of Mother Eugénie's character. She saw how the charm of her conversation, and the ease and dignity of her manner made people forget that she was diminutive and deformed in body. She saw how useful would be her knowledge of the world, how vigorous was her understanding, how energetic and decided her will, how large and generous her heart. On the other hand she saw that there were dangers counterbalancing, to some

extent, these gifts ; a tendency to yield up her better judgment under the influence of feeling and to cling tenaciously to an opinion once formed, Moreover, trained as Mother Eugénie had been in the school of Madame Baudemont and Monsieur de Saint-Estève, her religious formation was defective, and her natural inclination to be masterful was not quite eradicated. To win this soul wholly and irrevocably to the love of the Sacred Heart and to bind her to the Society was the task which Mother Barat set herself, and as love was the only talisman she ever employed, she lavished this upon her. She loved her in spite of, and even all the more because of the sorrow she had caused her, and she loved her on account of her hopes of what the future might bring forth. As in her close intercourse with Mother Barat at the Rue des Postes Mother Eugénie learnt to know her Superior as she never had known her till then, her own sorrow for the past grew so intense that it even affected her health. Her mother took alarm, and Mother Barat sent her, in 1817, to Amiens for the autumn months. But it was scarcely a change for the better. The sight of the place which had witnessed her disloyalty added bitter remorse to her suffering. At this time there was some correspondence on matters of business between the house at Amiens and that which Monsieur de Saint-Estève had founded in Rome, and as Mother Eugénie was obliged to write, she took the opportunity of expressing, in a letter which she knew Monsieur de Saint-Estève would see, some of her indignant sorrow.

Mother Barat did her best to comfort her. She begged of her to think of what had happened only to thank God for having opened her eyes ; she reminded her that she had acted in good faith, and that God looks to the intention only. "He has brought you back to your Mother's heart," she continued, "and who rests there more safely than you do ? I should never have loved you so much had it not been for the past. Let us say then : *Felix culpa*, since the fault was only a material one, and there was no malice in it." In another letter she said : "God has been very merciful towards me

since He has given me back my dear child whom others tried to steal away from me. Can I, after that, complain of the trials I have had to bear, trials which I so richly deserved ?"

Shortly after Mother Eugénie's departure a fever broke out at the school in the Rue des Postes. Several children were ill, and one dangerously so. Mother Eugénie implored to be allowed to return, but for some time was kept away. "My child, my dear child," Mother Barat wrote to her, "do not be unhappy about your little one. I am there and on the watch. I take good care of her I promise you." But the symptoms grew more dangerous, and the child died a few days later. At this news Mother Eugénie could not remain away, but her return brought her to the death-beds of two other children. After this the fever attacked the novices, and two died. "If victims were required, why was I not chosen ?" Mother Barat wrote in her great sorrow to Amiens. "I must be very guilty to be always set aside thus."

She wrote to Mother Thérèse : "God wills us to be in the midst of the sick and dying ; we must adore Him, and be resigned to His will. How many sufferings are included in our vocation, but we must love it all the more for this. We should suffer less if we were Carmelites, and this alone should console us for not being so." "Crosses are plentiful on every side," she wrote to Mother Prevost. "Once more *Fiat*. The Society was built upon them from the beginning, and I hope that they will secure its stability."

The school in the Rue des Postes survived this time of trial, and flourished again when it had passed away. The children were devotedly fond of their mistresses and their school-life, but above all else they loved Mother Barat. She wrote, about this time, that she had given a severe correction to one of them, and that this very child told her mother, who came to see her the next day, that a better school could not be found, that it was the first school in Europe ! Mother Barat also wrote that having threatened two or three with expulsion unless they behaved better, she had never seen more bitter

grief, that main force would have been necessary to get them out of the house.

As time went on, the increase in school and novitiate made it necessary to take an adjacent house, and in August, 1819, the novices removed into the Rue de l'Arbalète. Most of the convents were too small now for the work done in them, and yet foundations were being multiplied.

CHAPTER XVI

A NEW WORLD. 1818.

No longer on the golden-fretted sands,
Where many a shallow tide abortive chafes,
May'st thou delay; life onward sweeping blends
With far-off heaven: the dauntless one who braves
The perilous flood with calm unswerving hands
The elements sustain: cleave thou the waves.

M. BLIND.

WHEN, at the conclusion of the General Congregation, Mother Duchesne was elected Secretary General to Mother Barat, it seemed as if her hopes of the foreign missions were doomed to another indefinite postponement, as if her path for the future would lead her where nature rather than grace would have her be, as if the wishes of her heart rather than the aspirations of her soul were to be satisfied; for there is no doubt that her love for Mother Barat was her strongest natural feeling. But if, as seemed likely, the Mother House of the Society of the Sacred Heart was henceforth to be her abode, what was to be thought of the past? Had God's voice spoken or was the desire of giving all and leaving all for the foreign missions, which, like the clue to her life, had run through all its varying destinies, only an enthusiastic dream?

Nearly twelve years of expectation had elapsed since she had first spoken to Mother Barat of her wish, and during all that time the influence of her Superior's holiness and wisdom had been softening as far as possible the rugged energy of her character, curbing the vehement impulses, guiding and restraining the tendency to rash action, until a change had been wrought that made her fit to carry out God's designs.

But the very change that made her capable of undertaking the great enterprise made her more than ever invaluable at home, and when Mother Barat watched her and saw how indefatigably she laboured at the Rue des Postes, the wish was father to the thought that God perhaps would leave her one who was at that time really her right hand.

At a later date, when talking over the past, she owned that she thought then she could not do without Mother Duchesne. She went on to tell how, when after a time the latter returned to the subject of the missions, she had begged her never to refer to it again, as there was no opening for the Society in that field of labour.

But Mother Duchesne would not take this for an answer: "You do not mean," she said, "that I am not to think of it any more! Why, Reverend Mother, do you not remember that you were the first to speak to me about it? You re-awakened, in my heart, desires that were sleeping there, desires that came I believe from God. Can I give it all up now?"

And as Mother Duchesne thus pleaded, Mother Barat's thoughts turned back to her own longings, but entering as she did into Mother Duchesne's feelings, she said calmly: "Let us look at the matter sensibly, Philippine. If I were to bid you go and convert the Indians, what should you do without companions, money, support, or even any means of transit? Do you expect that God would enable you to walk on the waters? . . . I have no such confidence, and do not feel at all inspired to tempt Providence by sending you off with no other provision than the hope of performing miracles. Wait, go on praying. Perhaps later on we may think of it. It is out of the question at present." But Mother Duchesne was not convinced. "I do not ask for anything," she said sorrowfully, "only say: Go, and I will start at once with nothing but the grace of obedience." "But my faith," added Mother Barat, "was not so lively as hers, and I did not say the word she so earnestly begged me to pronounce. Shortly afterwards, to calm her, I told her a story of a Jesuit who, like herself, had

long sighed after the foreign missions, and, like her, had prayed, fasted, laboured, and suffered for many years, to obtain his wish, which at last was granted. The first thing he did, after landing on a distant shore, was to come across an old savage at the point of death, and he baptized him. But soon afterwards, the missionary was seized with a mortal illness, and complained to our Lord for taking him out of the world at the very beginning of an apostolate that he had so long desired. Then God made him understand that he had not bought at too dear a price the signal favour of saving a soul, that his vocation for the missions had been given to him for this savage, and that every thing he had done to correspond to his vocation had been for the same end. Mother Duchesne did not care much for this story ; she would have been just as well pleased not to have heard it, but I pretended not to notice this, and reminded her of it now and then.

"Matters stood thus, when, on the 14th of January, 1817, Mgr Dubourg, Bishop of Louisiana, arrived from America, and was good enough to come and see me. Mother Duchesne knew of his visit, for she was portress, and when she came to tell me he was there, she implored me not to let such an opportunity slip. God's time had come, she assured me, and I had now but to say the word. I did not show that I shared her conviction, but only said that if the Bishop began the subject I might talk of it with him, but that I should want a year or eighteen months to prepare. Nothing was said on that occasion, but the Bishop came the next day to say Mass in our chapel, and I sat with him whilst he breakfasted. He told me then he was anxious to have communities of nuns in his immense diocese, and should think himself very happy if he could obtain religious of the Sacred Heart. He did his utmost to prevail upon me to consent to send some one. Things are looking well for Mother Duchesne, I thought to myself ; and answered that if the plan were feasible I should have some one quite ready for the work. I then told him about Mother Duchesne, and her vocation, and he was delighted at what he heard. He asked to see her, and she was called. She knew

that her prayers were heard, and too full of gratitude for words, she knelt for his blessing."

Nothing was decided at this visit, but the Bishop was to come back to Paris later before his return to America. Mother Barat had in fact as time went on been more and more persuaded of the reality of Mother Duchesne's call. On the 21st of October, 1816, she wrote to Grenoble: "Philippine's thoughts are still fixed upon crossing the ocean, and my brother has almost made it possible. In spite of my dread of this undertaking, I am coming to think it will be."

Father Barat was living at Bordeaux, and in frequent intercourse with missionaries going to and returning from the New World. Towards the end of 1816, he had seen and spoken with Mgr Dubourg, and with characteristic decision had settled the affair of Mother Duchesne's vocation to his own satisfaction, in favour of her wishes, but he had no authority to act, and those who had authority were more cautious. Monsieur Perreau was far from disapproving of the scheme but he thought it inopportune, and held that the interests of the Society required Mother Duchesne nearer home. Father Varin had allowed her to make a vow to devote herself, under obedience, to the foreign missions, but he was very much averse to her leaving Mother Barat at that time. The opinion of these two, her chief advisers, weighed so much with the latter, that when, in May, Mgr Dubourg came back to Paris, she was obliged to tell him that no decision had been taken. It was a great disappointment, for he had come in the full expectation of finding at least a definite promise awaiting him, if not a colony ready to set off. He tried the effect of remonstrances, but he pleaded in vain, and at length turned to go. If he was down-hearted, Mother Barat certainly felt it acutely, and as she accompanied him to the door, prayed earnestly that God's will might be done. Mother Duchesne saw what was going on, and that no promise had been given. God inspired her to make one last effort. On the threshold of the convent, she threw herself on her knees before Mother Barat, and clasped her outstretched hands: "Consent,

consent," she implored, "oh, do consent." The full light came to Mother Barat with these words, God's light, for after that she never doubted of His will. She gave the required consent immediately, and told Mother Duchesne that she would set about choosing those who were to go with her. Matters were quickly arranged with the Bishop, and it was agreed that the following spring Mother Duchesne and her companions should start for Louisiana.

Two choir religious were chosen from amongst many who had volunteered. The first was Octavie Berthold, then in her thirtieth year. She was one of the novices who had come from Grenoble to Paris when the noviceship in the Rue des Postes was first founded, and she made her vows on the feast of the Martyrs of Japan, February 5th, 1817. Her father had been private secretary to Voltaire, and she herself had been brought up a Calvinist, but when once the light of truth entered her soul, it guided her to the height of self-sacrifice. There was no form of suffering for which she did not long, and God fully satisfied her desires. Her appearance and manner were such as could not fail to make her attractive to the children, and she devoted herself to them with such entire abnegation of self, that Mother Barat knew that the most entire confidence could be placed in her, and she admitted her to Profession a year after she had made her first vows.

The second was Eugénie Audé who had also come from Grenoble to the Paris noviceship. Her conversion was not from Calvinism, but from a great love of pleasure. She had seen much of the world both in Italy and France, and it required a great grace to free her from its trammels. She used to tell how, one evening on her return home from a ball, she saw reflected in the mirror before her not herself in her gay attire, but the countenance of the *Ecce Homo*. She tore off her finery, and her life henceforth belonged to the Man of Sorrows who had thus shown her the anguish He had endured for her salvation. Even her entrance into the noviceship, which took place as soon as possible, did not immediately obliterate the stamp of vanity and worldliness from her manner and tone of

thought, but a retreat given in November, 1816, by Father Roger, gave her what was wanting. She soon made such progress that Mother Barat did not hesitate to send her with Mother Bigeu to make the foundation at Quimper, and during her stay there she heard the voice of God in her soul calling her to still further detachment. It was not until almost the last moment before Mother Duchesne's departure, that Mother Barat heard of her desire for the foreign missions. She recalled her immediately to Paris, but the journey, even with all possible speed, took five days. She had just time to prepare for making her Profession on the 8th of February, and she set off a few hours later for Bordeaux.

Two lay-sisters, Catherine Lamarre, and Marguerite Manteau from Niort, were chosen to accompany Mother Duchesne. They were both of mature age and tried virtue, and proved invaluable helpmates in all the hard days that followed.

On the 7th of February, Mother Barat assembled all the community then at the Rue des Postes, "and spoke to us," Mother Audé writes, "burning and heart-stirring words on the greatness of our vocation in the light of faith. 'If you but raised one new tabernacle in Louisiana,' she said, 'or made these poor Indians breathe but one act of love for our Lord, would you not be too happy?' Her soul spoke in her words; they were full of the faith and love with which she sought to fill our hearts. And when she said to us: 'Come, you who will always be dear to us in the Heart of Jesus,' we fell at her feet. Mother Duchesne, whom she named Superior, kissed them, but our hearts were too full to speak. In the evening, we saw her again at recreation, and she gave us various little things she was using, her watch and the string by which her cross was fastened. She would have liked to give us every thing she had."

Mother Duchesne had never thought it possible she should be named Superior of the missionary party, and it was a hard cross to her. Her only consolation in accepting it was the thought that she should be able to bear thus a larger share than her Sisters of the sufferings that would fall to the lot of all.

The next day began with the ceremony of Eugénie Audé's profession, performed by the Abbé Perreau, who preached on the text from the Canticle of Canticles: *My Beloved to me, and I to Him.* After this the Blessed Sacrament was exposed all day. In the course of the day Father Varin came, and Mother Audé put into his hands her cross and ring, as she wished to receive them again from him, whom she revered as the spiritual Father of the Society. Fathers Druilhet and Roger also came to say good-bye. Mother Barat had never been able, even when it was far off, to think of this parting without dread, and now that it was come her heart was full of anguish. Mother Duchesne showed only joy and unfaltering courage. She encouraged every one, and when it was time to go she was the first to rise. Octavie Berthold could not restrain her tears; Mother Duchesne took her hand, and led her over the threshold. A few minutes later they were on their way to Bordeaux. It was not however until the 21st of March, Holy Saturday, 1818, that they left the shores of France in a small sailing vessel the *Rebecca.*

Before leaving Paris, Mother Duchesne had written to Mother Barat a letter which she intended her to open only after her departure. It described in full the origin and history of her vocation for the missions, expressed much sorrow for any pain she might have given her, and ended thus: "God has provided me with means of expiation in this charge which you have given me. My greatest happiness will be to form for you daughters who will be worthy of you; otherwise I would rather die." She said this, as she afterwards explained, to allay the anxiety which she feared Mother Barat would feel later on at having entrusted to her such a mission.

Four days after Mother Duchesne had left Paris, Mother Barat wrote:

Paris, February 12th, 1818.

It is not without emotion, dear Mother, that I write you this my first letter since you were given the task of leading a little flock so far away from us. It was very hard to part! What must the reality have been, when in prospect it cost me so much! Our Lord, indeed,

sweetened it wonderfully by the thought that you would be happy in doing His most holy will amidst labours and privations. Your example strengthened me; my old attraction for such a vocation woke up within me, and I could not help envying your lot, for there seems no chance of my sharing it. Alas, what use should I be on the missions! At least pray for me; you owe me this for the tender interest I bear you, and which distance will but increase.

I did not need your letter to be convinced that your high vocation is from God. The persistency of your desires, the ease with which the plan (apparently so beset with difficulties) was carried out when God's time had come, the way every thing concurred to bring about the departure that cost us so much, the strength God gave you to overcome obstacles, all proves to me that, in spite of the arguments of human prudence, our Lord has called you to found a convent of the Sacred Heart in America.

Now, my dear child, enter more and more fully into the designs of our merciful God. Try to grow each day more worthy of His work by laying a deeper foundation of humility in your soul, for out of this will spring gentleness and forbearance with the souls entrusted to you. I am happy about your love for them, and I know that you will do all in your power to sweeten the sacrifice they have made of all that they might so justly love on earth and in religion. Take care of your health. The hard penance of the charge of Superior, which you have always so much dreaded, must replace all other penances.

We are longing for news of you. Let us know the exact day you start, that I may offer my Communion for you, and take perhaps my last farewell of you in this world, in the Sacred Heart. It is painful to write these words, but it is for God! Shall I be less generous than you who have set me so courageous an example?

Every one here sends most affectionate greeting.... We are praying for you. Pray for me. You know part of my needs.

Mother Barat spent most of the summer at Grenoble, and wrote from there, on July 6th, to Mother Duchesne.

Since I have been on your dear mountain, how many thoughts, how many recollections, bitter as well as sweet, pass through my soul. I fancy I see you again receiving me as when I first came, and giving the house and community into my hands. Then I think of the pleasure I always felt after my journeys in finding you again in this peaceful solitude. It was very painful to me this time not only not to find you here, but to know how far off you are! Faith, it is true, comes to my

help, and in the end I am able, by forgetting myself, to look on you as very happy. What matters that we should suffer if God be glorified?

I am longing to hear how you bore the voyage, if you are getting near St. Louis, if you are well, and how your dear fellow-travellers are. I must have patience, but it is long to have heard nothing since Easter.

Mother Barat's first letter from Mother Duchesne after she had set sail was dated May 16th, the anniversary of the day of Mgr Dubourg's final visit to the Rue des Postes. It was written off Cuba and told of many trials and great hardships, frequent dangers from storms, fire, and pirates. But God's providence had watched over the missionaries, and they were then only five hundred and eighty miles from their destination.

In August she heard of their safe arrival. "We cried with joy," she wrote directly afterwards, "to hear that you had escaped all the perils of the sea, and also with sorrow to think how great is the distance that separates us. But faith came to dry our tears, and our hearts in union with yours beat higher at the thought of the meeting in store for us one day."

On the 25th of May, the *Rebecca* entered the muddy waters of the Mississippi, and on Friday the 29th, the feast of the Sacred Heart, she touched the shore, and they all landed. It was evening, and under cover of the darkness Mother Duchesne, having stepped on shore, knelt down and kissed the ground. The first halt was at the Ursuline Convent in New Orleans, where she and her companions were most hospitably entertained. A letter from Mother Barat was awaiting them there, but Mother Duchesne would not open it until she had sanctified the joy it caused her by laying it before the tabernacle.

The further instructions which Mgr Dubourg had written to Mother Duchesne as to their journey had miscarried, and after waiting for many weeks she set off on the Mississippi for St. Louis, his episcopal city, arriving on August the 22nd. But it was not there that she was to settle at first. Mgr Dubourg preferred that the first convent should be opened at St. Charles, then a small town with a motley population, about thirty miles from St. Louis. This was a great disappointment, and in the struggling existence that began there for her, her love of

poverty, hardship, and humiliation were fully satisfied. At the end of the following year, she and her community removed to a place nearer St. Louis called St. Ferdinand, or Fleurissant, where the Society established its first American novicesship.

In the first year of Mother Duchesne's missionary work, Mother Barat forwarded to her the strongest encouragement she could have received: the words in which the Sovereign Pontiff, Pope Pius VII., after saying how much he rejoiced at hearing of her and her companions having crossed the ocean to consecrate themselves to the service of God, of the Church, and of souls, in the New World, wished them every prosperity and success, in token of which he gave his blessing, not only to those already gone, but to all who should follow them.

The thirty years of Mother Duchesne's apostolate in America were indeed full to overflowing of patient endurance, of heroic toil, of disappointment, of unflinching courage, of ever-growing humility and annihilation of self. We must not here follow out this history in detail, nor trace the growth of her sanctity. This has been related in her Life, and the preliminary process for the introduction of the Cause of her Beatification, is bringing her work and character daily into greater relief. A stronger tie can scarcely be conceived than that which united her and Mother Barat, though the ocean parted them, and they never met again on earth. Mother Duchesne was doing what Mother Barat had longed to do, and she was strengthened, supported, guided by the same strong, loving and holy hand that had prepared her for her mission. It would be hard to over-estimate the effect of Mother Barat's perfect sympathy in enabling Mother Duchesne to overcome the difficulties that beset her path, for, long as her career in America was, success came to any work that had been especially her own, only when death had removed her from the scene of her labours. She planted the seed, and the convents of the Sacred Heart, which in most of the large cities of the United States and Canada have done and are doing so much good, speak more forcibly than words of the blessing that fostered the increase.

CHAPTER XVII

ALOYSIA JOUVE. 1818–1821.

Love thy God, and love Him only
And thy breast shall ne'er be lonely.
In that one great Spirit meet
All things mighty, grave, and sweet.
Vainly strives the soul to mingle
With a being of our kind:
Vainly hearts with hearts are twined;
For the deepest still is single.
An impalpable resistance
Holds like natures at a distance.
Mortal, love that Holy One,
Or for ever dwell alone.

AUBREY DE VERE.

THE friendships with those whom God brought under Mother Barat's care form many beautiful episodes in her life, but none is more beautiful than that of her affection for a niece of Mother Duchesne's, named Euphrosyne Jouve. She was amongst the pupils who were at Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut when the house was first made over to the Society, and Mother Barat soon noticed her as a child of remarkable promise. She was then about eight years old, very high-spirited, exceedingly clever and attractive, and by no means devoid of the Duchesne characteristics of pride and self-will. Her aunt was teaching her Latin amongst other things, and Mother Barat often called her into her room to help her with her lessons, or speak to her of God and holy things. Her fearless courage, keen wit, and generosity made her a child after her own heart.

About the time of her First Communion, Euphrosyne began to take seriously to heart the correction of her faults. Mother Duchesne had watched with the utmost care over the

development of her character, and had spared neither punishments nor reproofs, but now Euphrosyne herself took the work in hand. The day fixed for the ceremony was the 8th of September, but it was put off until November because the other children were not sufficiently prepared. Euphrosyne's conduct was quite satisfactory, and she might have made her First Communion on the original day, but she herself begged to make it with the rest, saying she was less ready than they were, and that she looked upon the additional time before her as a great grace. She prepared for it most fervently, and from that time began the great devotion to St. Aloysius that made her imitate him so faithfully during the remainder of her short life. Euphrosyne was naturally reserved, and it was not till shortly after her First Communion, when Mother Thérèse Maillucheau came as Mistress General to Grenoble, that she let any one know that she wished to consecrate her life to God. For several years after this, Mother Thérèse helped her to overcome the pride that made her often overbearing and resentful, and Euphrosyne learnt under her guidance the difficult art of self-conquest. Before she was fourteen, she left school, as her mother wished to have her help in bringing up her younger brothers and sisters, and Euphrosyne threw herself into the occupations of home, whilst carrying on at the same time, with great steadiness, the practices of the spiritual life she had learnt at the convent.

Little intercourse with Grenoble was allowed her, and her mother hoped, as time went on, to see her married and settled at Lyons. But though Euphrosyne said nothing about her vocation, she had great strength of purpose, and, fearing lest the attraction and love of home — influences which acted powerfully upon her — should make her unfaithful, she consecrated herself to God by a vow of virginity. "The world will drag me down," she wrote to Mother Thérèse, who had left Grenoble at this time for Ghent, "unless God takes me in His arms. I am full of pride, and I do not know what will become of me." After this she made the resolution never to show likes or dislikes. On Sundays, she taught catechism to

some poor children, but otherwise her life was like that of any other girl of her age.

After a severe illness in the course of which she had been very near death, she went for change of air to the country, and spent two months in the midst of surroundings different from any she had been in before. She was with cousins of her own age, whose one aim in life seemed to be to make her enjoy herself in their own way, after the fashion of the world. She was displeased with herself to find how easy and how pleasant it was to nature to descend from the high thoughts of the children of God. When she came back to Lyons, it was with a kind of dismay that she realized that the quiet life of home had lost much of its charm to her, and that there was a sort of craving in her soul for pleasure and amusement. She wrote to Mother Thérèse to tell her how unhappy she was, and received in return the advice to consult her confessor about her vocation. She had never decided what Order to enter, and feared that her love for Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut and the Society of the Sacred Heart might weigh unduly in the balance of her choice. She prayed much for guidance by her confessor's advice, and turned with especial confidence to St. Aloysius. Her doubts then soon disappeared, and she wrote to Mother Duchesne to ask her to break the news to her mother, and obtain her consent for entering the noviceship at Sainte-Marie. Madame Jouve had the same spirit of faith as her sister, and though at first when she heard of Euphrosyne's vocation — which she had probably more than suspected — she showed some coldness towards her, when she saw how much sorrow her child felt at this, she relaxed her severity and assured her that she would not stand in her way, that her only wish was to know what her vocation was, and, this point once decided, she would be the first to help her in following it. But she required a year's trial before any thing was done.

Euphrosyne spent the months that intervened between this and her entrance into the noviceship in a steady effort at keeping in check all the unruly desires that make war in the human heart upon the higher aspirations of man's spiritual

nature. She went very frequently to the sacraments, and copied as far as she could what she read in the life of St. Aloysius of the penance he practised in his father's house. "When I read his life," she said to her friend Louise de Vidaud, who in a visit she paid her at Lyons discovered some of her ingenious ways of mortifying herself, "when I read his life such a desire for suffering comes over me that if I listened to it I should buy up all Monsieur Ferrus' shop (of instruments of penance)."

Her father had business in Grenoble at the end of 1814, and it was arranged that she should travel with him to the novitiate. She suffered keenly at parting from all she loved, but concealed it that she might spare others. As she and her father were driving up the steep hill that leads to Sainte-Marie from Grenoble, her sorrow at leaving all, and the struggle with a feeling of disgust at what lay before her were so strong that it seemed to her as if that hill were a very Calvary, and as if she could not endure the suffering unless by a special grace from God. But this agony was the last on the subject of her vocation; henceforward temptation never assailed her on that point.

The journal of Sainte-Marie records that four postulants entered the novitiate on December 14th, 1814; one was Octavie Berthold, and another Euphrosyne Jouve. Octavie was to go with Mother Duchesne to America, but Euphrosyne's mission was nearer home, and the longing for martyrdom which she had always known was to be satisfied in God's own way. "A religion which does not claim sacrifice—yea, searching sacrifice, painful sacrifice—cannot be Christianity," says Bishop Hedley.* When St. Paul besought the Romans to offer their bodies "a living and holy sacrifice," he was speaking to all and for all, but those who are consecrated in a special way to God are bound to tend towards fulfilling more and more perfectly the office of victim. They have offered themselves as a holocaust, and happy are they if they are taken at their word.

Aloysia's one desire on entering the noviceship was to make

* *The Christian Inheritance*, p. 184.

her sacrifice as complete as possible. She would have wished to be received as a lay-sister, but as this was not granted to her she sought out whatever was most likely to humble her pride. "Pride has inflicted deep wounds on my soul," she wrote, "they must be cured by humiliation and penance." She loved the poor, the sick, any who were suffering, and she devoted herself with love and gratitude to the class given to her in the poor school. Selfishness, we are told, takes three chief forms, self-love, self-will, and a clinging to or undue esteem of one's own judgment. All these she made war upon, and by the time of her vows God ruled as undisputed Master of her soul.

She had been only a few months in the noviceship when Mother Duchesne left Grenoble for Paris, where she was summoned with Mother Bigeu to the General Congregation. She little thought that she was never to see Sainte-Marie or Aloysia again. When the rest of the novices left for the new noviceship in the Rue des Postes, Aloysia was kept at Grenoble where, by that time, she was teaching the first class, and giving proof of great ability as well as of great virtue.

Her longings were always for the foreign missions, and when it was settled that Mother Duchesne was to go to America, her great desire was to accompany her. Mother Duchesne, who counted on Aloysia to do much for God, once said to Mother Thérèse who was bewailing her fate at being left behind: "Form Aloysia that she may come instead of you, and you will be quite satisfied with her success."

Three months only had elapsed since Aloysia had made her vows when her illness first showed itself. It was apparently insignificant, only a sore on her foot, but there was no checking the disease, which proved to be blood-poisoning. She seemed to have a presentiment of what was coming, for a short time previously she said to one of her friends: "I do not know what is going to happen, but I feel sure God has some sacrifice in store for me. My dear saint (St. Aloysius) has been telling me for a long time past to get up my courage." "Perhaps you will leave Grenoble," suggested her friend. "No,"

answered Aloysia, "it is you who will leave it, I shall die here." "Die here!" exclaimed the other in astonishment, "No Canada, no Red Indians, no martyrdom? Have you given it all up?" "I never wished so much for martyrdom," Aloysia answered quietly, "but there are more ways than one of being martyred, and I am sure there is a little martyrdom in store for me here." About the same time she said to Mother Thérèse: "God is asking some great sacrifice of me, and I do not know what it is. I feel that every thing I care for is to be taken from me." One of the novices asked her which of the virtues of St. Aloysius was her favourite one. "Indeed," she answered, "I cannot tell, for I know nothing of them. Yet I have always felt sure I should die at the same age as he did."

Courage was a striking quality of Aloysia's. During the Hundred Days there was fighting around Grenoble, and the terrace at Saint-Marie was within range of the fire. But whilst many were terrified at the whistling of the balls and the booming of the cannon, Aloysia's spirit only rose. "I like the din and clash of war," she said. "It reminds me that I am a soldier of Jesus Christ." It was in this spirit that she met what was before her.

Every thing that prudence could suggest was tried for Aloysia, and Mother Barat was one of the first to take alarm. At the very beginning of her illness she wrote to Mother Thérèse that she was to have less work and more sleep, and was not to sing at all. "We must take care of her," she added. "If you only knew how few there are like her, and how difficult it is to form them!"

A few months later she wrote again to say that every possible care was to be taken of her. She proposed to have her in Paris to try whether the climate suited her better than the mountain air of Sainte-Marie; besides she could take care of her herself, and consult the best doctors. Then if Aloysia recovered she would keep her, and what a help she would be! "I should be rich enough if I had one like her," she added. "I would not ask for two." Madame Jouve wanted Aloysia

to be seen by the best doctors at Lyons, and Mother Barat did not refuse. The invalid spent some weeks at home but to no avail, and the journey to Paris was found impracticable. The wounds that had begun on the foot spread by degrees over the whole body, and caused intense suffering which any movement increased tenfold. A long journey was therefore impossible, and Aloysia returned to Grenoble.

Mother Barat, though she wished all human means to be tried for her recovery, had little trust in them. She hoped much more from the effects of prayer, and she wished her, whilst in Lyons, to go to Fourvières to obtain a cure from our Lady at this great sanctuary. But sacrifice is the most efficacious form of prayer, and Mother Barat wrote: "Let Aloysia promise if she recovers to be ready to go wherever her Superior may send her. Perhaps our Lord has some special design upon the child. However, she must not suspect this herself. It is certain that if she gets well she is fitted for great things." "Offer Aloysia to St. Stanislaus," she wrote again. "We are earnestly begged to make a foundation in Poland. Promise him that if she is cured we will give her to his country."

And with the same object in view it was decided that she should make her Profession without further delay. "Perhaps," Mother Barat wrote, "our Lord is only waiting for this last sacrifice to give back her health. Let her promise, if she recovers, to consecrate it all to the greater glory of God."

Mother Duchesne's letters to Aloysia are not less full of faith and love. She wrote to her from Bordeaux:

> God, who sees how wide are your desires, thinks well that just now they should be repressed to purify them. You wish only His will, and as time goes on He will show us what it is. He wishes you to live in suffering and humility; may He be blessed for this. If He gives you back your health to work for His glory, may He be blessed then and always, in whatever He ordains for you. But do not forget what Monsieur de Montfort says: *From the time of Abraham to that of Jesus Christ, and from the time of Jesus Christ till now, when God wishes to raise a soul to high perfection He has withdrawn it from its*

country, loosened all the ties that bind it even to spiritual comforts arising from confidence and holy friendship. You will love this maxim in proportion as you are more united to your Spouse, who should engross every affection of your heart.

A Dieu. I am all yours,—PHILIPPINE.

God alone is necessary to our perfection and our happiness.

Before embarking she wrote again :

. . . It is very difficult to leave you so ill, but our sacrifice would not have been complete without this fresh pang. You may help on the success of our mission more by suffering than we by what we say and do. God has His designs ; I should have been too happy with you at my side. He is jealous of our affection, and separates us from what we love. We were hardly united in religion when to absence He adds this illness, which is a great weight upon my heart. I sometimes think He will cure you and give you a great deal to do for Him. Do not set any limits to your devotedness, even if it were necessary to come to America without any hope of meeting, but only to serve Him more generously. Good-bye, once more. Envy me, if you will, but do not think of robbing me of my happiness.

When Mother Barat went to Sainte-Marie after Mother Duchesne's departure, she had not seen Aloysia for several years. She had left her full of the vigour and promise of youth, and found her a wreck of her former self. Her smile was as sweet or sweeter than in the old days, her eyes as bright, her spirit as ardent, but her colour was gone, she panted for breath after the least exertion, and when she could walk, it was only upon crutches. The day after her arrival, Mother Barat wrote : "The poor child suffers very much, she can do nothing, and has several open wounds. She is the only person of really brilliant ability we have. She would be so useful to us in our foundations. But God does not see things as we do, and it is not for us to ask Him why. Let us hope against all hope. He will help us." She begged that prayers and Communions might be offered in all the houses of the Society for Aloysia.

"I wish when I look at her," she wrote to Mother Duchesne, "that I had the gift of miracles. Do obtain the miracle of

her cure. She would do so much for the Society." Whilst she was at Grenoble Mother Barat made herself Aloysia's nurse, dressed her wounds with her own hands, and sometimes, when alone with her, she gently kissed them. Aloysia, who already loved her deeply, was so touched by her kindness that she said: "If our Very Reverend Mother stayed here long I fear I should love her too much." Whatever prayers were offered for her recovery, Aloysia never joined in them. "Why do you pray for my cure?" she asked. "I feel within me an assurance that I shall die of this illness. Pray rather that I may have a good death." She always grew worse rather than better after a novena or a pilgrimage. "I knew you would kill me by your prayers," she said laughingly, and when they asked her to join her prayers with theirs: "I will do what you wish," she said, "but do not ask me to give up my hope of death; I think God sends it to me."

Before Mother Barat left Grenoble she gave Aloysia charge of the novices of whom there were still a few under the care of Mother Thérèse, and made her secretary and sub-assistant, as well as giving her a large share of authority in the house. It was not that she was under any misapprehension as to the gravity of her state, but she hoped this act of confidence would win from God the grace she so much longed for. All who saw Aloysia were astonished and edified at the courage and exactitude with which she performed her new duties, in spite of so much suffering and extreme weakness. The following year Mother Barat came back to Grenoble, and found Aloysia more suffering than before, but more united to God and more in love than ever with the Cross. "My child," she said to her, "make yourself very little under God's Hand; be very passive in the trials that your loving Father sends you. He has laid you on the Cross, and we may well envy you."

As she looked at Aloysia, she could not tell which to admire most, the graces showered on her or her faithfulness in corresponding with them. At this visit, she made her Assistant, and as she shortly afterwards took Mother Thérèse away for a time, Aloysia had to supply the place of the

Superior for four months. "What does age signify?" Mother Barat said to the community, when telling them of her choice, "if youth goes hand in hand with consummate virtue? I have found treasures of wisdom in her." Aloysia shed bitter tears in private over this mark of confidence to one so unworthy as she thought herself, but she showed her usual serenity before the community, and all hearts were touched by the charm of her simplicity. It was noticed how the new responsibility laid upon her seemed to clothe her with fresh wisdom. She hid her sufferings as much as possible, but her weakness was often betrayed, in spite of all her efforts. Yet she worked on, fulfilling in face of almost insuperable difficulties all the duties of her charge. "I am always in pain," she once confessed, "but work takes off my thoughts from it;" and on her crutches she went from the novices to the children and back again to the community, setting everywhere the example of a courage and patience that were nothing short of heroic. Mother Barat often wrote to her at this time, but unfortunately the letters were destroyed.

When Mother Thérèse came back, all hope of cure was at an end, and for the ten months that Aloysia still lived she seldom left her room. Yet once more an absence of the Superior placed her in charge of the house, though this time it was only from her bed that she could discharge her office.

When Mother Barat heard that the case was considered hopeless, she wrote in great sorrow to Mother Thérèse: "Oh, how bad and imperfect we are since our sins prevent our prayers for this dear child from being heard. How many Mothers in my place would have obtained their daughter's cure! If we had had faith and confidence, the Sacred Heart would have granted our petition. . . . Tell her how grieved I am to be so far from her now. I should so like to be with her, to take care of her, to encourage her. . . . I cannot make up my mind to lose her."

The news that there was no more hope came to Aloysia as a great joy, and she begged the doctor to repeat it several

times. When she had once heard that death was drawing near, she would talk of nothing else but this or Heaven. She looked on herself as no longer belonging to the earth. The first person to whom she wrote to say good-bye was Mother Barat, and her letter ended thus: "I say nothing of my wish to see you once more, and to receive your blessing before I die. I leave this to the Sacred Heart of our good Master. The God of all consolation will know how to shed them on you in profusion."

After receiving this letter, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Thérèse: "The details you give me bring comfort as well as sorrow, and the grief of losing her is sweetened by the thought of her happiness. . . . *Fiat!* God is the Master, and we need such examples. He has chosen this victim to expiate our miseries and imperfections. If I might form a wish it would be to see her once again before she dies, but I do not venture to hope for this. Kiss her for me, and tell her that I bless her with my whole heart. Ask her to pray a little for her Mother." This letter reached Grenoble after Aloysia's death. She was already with God when it was written.

During the last months that her thread of life held out her sufferings from the wounds that covered nearly her whole body were very great, and her state of weakness and emaciation was such that she could scarcely move. Yet, not only was she calmness and serenity itself, but she did not lose even the natural gaiety that gave such a charm to her company. When she was in her agony, Mother Thérèse sent, as was the custom at Grenoble, to beg that the passing-bell might be tolled for her at the cathedral, but it happened that the bell was being rung for another dying person. The message to this effect was whispered to Mother Thérèse who was close to Aloysia's bed. The latter heard it, and said: "You are too near; I hear all they say to you. You have sent to have the passing-bell rung for me, and it cannot be done." "Are you sorry?" said Mother Thérèse. "Oh, no," said Aloysia, "but I am amused at the portress' simplicity in letting me know," and the next day she inquired if they had succeeded

better. She lay listening to the bells tolling, and prayed for the souls passing before her into their eternity.

She expected to die on the feast of St. Aloysius, but the weeks and even the months wore on and the new year began. It seemed to surprise her, as each day dawned, to find that she was still alive. "I thought I was dying two or three times last night," she said once, "and here I am still. Oh! to die, to die would make me happy." "Shall I soon die?" she often asked; "Oh, I should like to die well!" Her agony lasted several days, for she was very young, not twenty-five, and youth fights hard for life. The 21st of January, 1821, was a Sunday, and the bell rang for Mass. Aloysia heard it, and united her offering with that of our Lord. "My God," she said, between the breaths that grew each minute slower, "I am too weak, I can do nothing, but I can still love Thee. Take every beating of my heart, they are all for Thee. St. Aloysius, pray for me. Mary my Mother, St. Joseph, obtain for me a good death."

The *Salve Regina* was then begun, and at its close, with one more loving and joyful glance at her crucifix, Aloysia gave up her soul to God.

"Where can a soul like hers be but in Heaven?" said Mother Barat, when she heard that all was over. This assurance was strengthened by the favours that followed, and that were very reasonably ascribed to her prayers. "Her two sisters, Amélie and Constance, will enter the noviceship at Easter," Mother Barat wrote shortly afterwards to Mother Duchesne, "and her brother Henry is going to be a Jesuit. This is a wonderful stroke of grace, for before her death he had quite other views."

So many favours were obtained in answer to prayer through her intercession, that the crypt where she was buried was often thronged by people from Grenoble. Her coffin was opened some time after her death, and the body was found quite incorrupt. This was all the more wonderful because of the state in which it was at the time of her death.

"That thou mayest rejoice the more," wrote St. Jerome

to Eustochium after the death of Paula, "know that thy mother has won her crown by a long martyrdom. For martyrdom does not consist only in the shedding of blood, but also in serving God, the Lord, with an irreproachable and fervent spirit. The former martyrdom merits a blood-red wreath, but the latter, a white garland of lilies."

This white wreath of lilies was surely on Aloysia's brow.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHAMBERY. LYONS. BORDEAUX. 1818–1819.

Every woman is or ought to be a cathedral,
Built on the ancient plan, a cathedral pure and perfect,
Built by that only law that Use be suggester of Beauty,
Nothing concealed that is done, but all things done to adornment,
Meanest utilities seized as occasions to grace and embellish.

CLOUGH.

EARLY in July, 1818, Mother Barat wrote from Grenoble: "We are expected in Savoy, our house is already furnished and partially repaired. It is supplied with water from a spring which gives of its abundance to the town. The gardens are very large. What can we want, you will say, and what are we waiting for before we take possession? Only letters patent, which are not so easy to obtain, as the French are not in great favour at present in Savoy."

The house to which she referred was an old convent of Poor Clares. It had been offered to her through the instrumentality of the most influential among the clergy of the place, one of whom, when the royal letters patent were at length received, came to Grenoble to be an escort for her and her companions on the day's journey across the mountains.

To Mother Barat it was always a special delight to be out of the reach of the festivities in her honour on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, and this year she had her wish, for they left Grenoble on July 21st. Hélène du Tour, a Savoyard novice of Sainte-Marie, was of the party, and writes: "Mother Thérèse was with our Mother General in the trap, of which the Abbé was the driver. Mother Bigeu and I followed in

a second, driven by the carpenter. When we were outside the town, the Abbé got on to the box, and drove so fast that our horse could scarcely keep up. A few hours at this pace took us to a good-sized village, near Le Touvet. There the horses had a feed of oats; a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine were also brought them. Mother Barat wished to share their banquet. She asked in charity for a bit of the bread, and dipped it into the carpenter's glass. When afterwards they came to ask her to take something, she answered, laughing, "that she and the horse had had luncheon together."

Their road lay through beautiful scenery, and amidst mountains that were the highest Mother Barat had yet seen. "I cannot tell you how I enjoyed that day," she wrote to Mother Eugénie de Gramont, "away from all congratulations, and in such lovely country. Our house is beautifully situated . . . yet I am counting the days till I leave it, for I cannot, alas! when I climb up the hill at the back, hope, like the mother of Tobias, to see all those I love afar off coming along the road."

The reception the nuns met with on all hands was most kind, and every thing promised well, when a totally unforeseen obstacle threatened for a short time to ruin their prospects.

Mother Barat had been only a week at Chambéry, when who should appear upon the scene but Madame Baudemont! She was now Superior of the Convent in Rome, and was on her way to France in search of new members for her community. She was received at Chambéry by the Governor, lodged in his house, and presented by his wife to the Archbishop. Rumour spread the report that her house was flourishing, the Rule approved, and that she had been authorized by the Sovereign Pontiff to make new foundations. The natural inference was that the Society of the Sacred Heart was a branch cut off from this Institute, its members schismatical, and unworthy of confidence; and those who drew this conclusion went so far as to affirm that the Archbishop already regretted that he had admitted the religious to Chambéry. Mother Barat wrote on August 2nd, to Mother de Charbonnel:

Madame Baudemont and her companions have just been to see me. I received them very well, but they are moving Heaven and earth against us, and this was the Cross our Lord had in store for this new foundation. Monsieur Perreau must come to our help again. These squalls will, I am sure, season our little bark. The more the spirit of those who are against us is known, the less we shall have to fear from them. However, we must have recourse to higher authority to stop these intrigues, or we shall not have a moment's peace.

She wrote on the same day to Mother Eugénie de Gramont:

Mother de Charbonnel will have told you of our new cross. I implore you, my child, not to torment yourself about it, and, above all, not to let your mind go back over the past. You must bless the Lord for having withdrawn you from their hands. What a spirit, dear Eugénie! They mean well, but what a grace to be free from them! I shall be in Paris probably before them, for I feel that if these visitors come in upon you, it will be well that I should not be far off. You see, my child, that the Cross, which has brought us together once, will soon do so now a second time.

The following day, she added:

The gossip goes on here up and down the town! May our Lord be blessed for it! The Archbishop came to see us to-day. I hope that we shall be able to satisfy his mind even before our papers arrive.

I have given Madame Baudemont three hundred francs as part payment of what she claims from us, and have promised to send her the rest when I get to Paris, as also her books, relics, &c. I do not wish to wound charity for the sake of money. Our Lord will make it up to us, as this sacrifice is for His sake. . . . You know what act of gratitude our Lord wants of you, . . . that you should love Him and the Society above every thing; your Mother must come only third. I have been but the instrument of God's mercies towards you, and your only duty towards me is docility to the teaching I transmit to you from Him.

As soon as testimonials in favour of the Society could reach Chambéry, they came, through the instrumentality of Monsieur Perreau, in abundance. But the Archbishop had declared himself quite satisfied, even before he had read them. His interview with Mother Barat had effectually enlightened him, and if he had really doubted he never did so again.

Mother Barat wrote of this to Mother Eugénie :

Monseigneur came again only two days later. Another attempt of this kind will find him on his guard, and ready to meet it. This is what we have gained. "For to them that love God all things work together unto good." Do we not wish to love Him? Of course we do. Well, let us have no fear. You think perhaps that this *contre-temps* vexed me. Not at all. I was convinced some greater good would result from it, and this is what has happened.

All quieted down after this, and leaving Mother Bigeu at Chambéry as Superior, Mother Barat went back to Grenoble. However, she had only been there a few days when she was again wanted at Chambéry. The letter she wrote to Mother Thérèse the day after her arrival shows what her feelings were at leaving Sainte-Marie, and taking with her, as she was obliged to do, people who were wanted there :

Chambéry, August 29th, 1818.

I will not undertake to give you any account of our short journey ; my two companions will do this. Indeed I should be puzzled how to give any details. I was so grieved at leaving you, and my heart was so heavy that I could hardly say a word on the way. When I thought of you, your troubles and cares, and how overwhelmed you would be by it all, I could hardly help crying. I longed to be alone, and was not so even for a moment. Of course I saw nothing of the country ; my whole being had remained behind with you. Only the thought of God brought me back now and then into the depths of my soul, to offer Him the sacrifice I had just made.

One of her companions writes :

We left Sainte-Marie early, escorted by the little girls of the poor school whose numbers increased at every step. When we reached the carriage we kissed them all, and only some of the elder ones went with us a little way further. Our Mother General was soon immersed in prayer. Her expression was full of the deepest calm and peace. My companion and I delighted in looking at her, and soon felt our hearts raised to God. I was very sorry not to be a painter, for I could then easily have taken the portrait we wish for so much.

Early in September Mother Barat went back to Paris, but not before she had made arrangements for a foundation at

Lyons, which was begun in the following month. She had stayed a day there on her way back to Paris, and after receiving Holy Communion in the cathedral on the feast of the Nativity of our Lady, had felt an extraordinary certainty that it was the will of God a convent should be established. "I felt myself so impelled," she said afterwards, "that it was impossible to resist." She immediately began the search for a suitable house which was to be dedicated in honour of our Lady's Nativity. Mother Bigeu was to come from Chambery to carry out the business.

Go to Lyons [Mother Barat wrote to her], and work for the Sacred Heart. If our Lord calls you there, as I cannot doubt, you will have nothing to fear; all will succeed. The will of God is so manifest that your confidence should be boundless, as mine is. I know that the spread of our Society offends some people; that is because they do not see the Hand of God leading it all. When they are convinced that it is God's work, this rapid progress will no longer surprise them; it will go twice as quickly in course of time, provided, alas, that I do not hinder it. This is my only anxiety.

The house and property of La Ferrandière were soon bought, and this beautiful convent, with its novitiate and school, is a constant reminder of our Lady's patronage.

Mother Barat would willingly have made no more foundations at this time. "We must wait a few years now," she wrote to Mother Duchesne, "and try to grow holy that we may be prepared to carry out God's designs." But she was not able to fulfil this desire, and a foundation at Bordeaux was made the following year. In the spring of 1819, Mgr d'Aviau wrote to Mother Barat to ask her to take charge of an orphanage at Bordeaux. It had been formed by a Madame de Lalanne, who now, in her old age, wished to join the Society, and make over to it the work to which she had been long devoted. Mother Barat knew her already, and had the highest opinion of her. Her maiden name was Félicie Dudevant. She had been brought up in a Visitation convent, but the world proved very seductive, and she entered with all her heart into its pleasures. At a grand ball given by the city of Bordeaux

in honour of the marriage of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, she had been as it were carried away by the whirlwind of excitement, but thinking over it afterwards when she was alone, the vanity and danger of it all came so forcibly before her that, falling on her knees, she promised Almighty God she would never dance again. At twenty, she married, but although her brilliant position obliged her to live in the world and mix in society, she never gave her heart to its pleasures. Until the Revolution broke out she devoted a large part of her time and her wealth to good works in Bordeaux, and after eleven years of exile came back there with her husband, but in comparative poverty, to resume the same life. He died in 1816, and she then joined a small Congregation of Sisters of Providence which she had established for the direction of orphan girls whom she had collected together. She once paid a visit to the Feuillants and from that time her great desire was to join the Society of the Sacred Heart with all her establishment. But she was very doubtful as to the possibility of the scheme and Mgr d'Aviau scarcely ventured to reassure her. "I, at my age," she said, "my Sisters, such simple souls, and our orphans only poor girls, can we hope Mother Barat will have us?"

But once again Mother Barat's discernment did not fail her. She saw how much true worth lay hid under Madame de Lalanne's humility, and she answered the application by saying that she could not "refuse a work so pleasing in God's sight; it will bring a blessing on the Society, and we shall soon love it more than any other."

"I prefer it to others," she wrote to the Archbishop, "because of the spirit of poverty, humility, and simplicity which pervades it. It will bring us closer to the Heart of Jesus. I shall envy those who are sent to Bordeaux."

In the course of the summer all the arrangements were completed. Madame de Lalanne, at the age of sixty-two, made her Profession, and all her little community became religious of the Sacred Heart. She continued as before to be Superior of the house. Mother Barat wrote to her:

Take in a spirit of obedience all the alleviations which are necessary; make no change in your way of life. Your thoughtfulness as to poverty is very good, but you must remember your position. Do not leave off giving your nephew his usual birthday present, and make no change in your will as to what you intended leaving to your niece and your goddaughter."

There were other recommendations full of the same kindness, and the same spirit of disinterestedness.

When the house near Lyons had been bought for the Society, Mother Barat sent for Mother de Charbonnel to take charge of the foundation, and this work inaugurated a whole series of similar undertakings which made her henceforth invaluable to Mother Barat, whilst the life of incessant activity which she led, brought out into singular relief her extraordinary fertility of resource. Emilie de Charbonnel was born, in 1774, of an ancient and noble family in the Velay. The excellent education she had received at a convent of Ursulines was completed at home by practical experience of housekeeping and, later on, of business matters, when after the outbreak of the Revolution it fell to her lot to keep together the remnants of the scattered fortunes of her family. "I do not think that after the royal family, any family in France suffered as much as mine," she said once in her old age with tears in her eyes.

Any one reading the details of her hair-breadth escapes, of the dangers this girl of nineteen faced and overcame to shelter priests, and procure Mass and the sacraments for her family and the peasants on their estate, of the help she brought to those nearest and dearest to her in prison, would imagine that she was of almost superhuman fortitude, and daring to the verge of rashness. Yet Emilie de Charbonnel (or Catherine as she was called from the time of her entrance into religion) was naturally of excessive timidity, afraid of every thing, even of her own shadow. The apparent inconsistency can only be accounted for by recognizing the immense power which her faith and her long habit of self-mastery gave her. Her love for and her duty to her parents made her brave every peril to

help them in their need. Charity overcame her fear of death, when, in spite of her terrors, she undertook to watch all night in a peasant's hut beside a corpse, and her love for God nerved her habitually to face darkness to go at midnight to the farm-houses where Mass was to be said. In her intense anxiety to take to the sacraments one who had been long deprived of them, she crossed the frozen Loire on foot one winter's night without any assurance that the ice would throughout bear her weight and that of her companion. Her faith made her put all her trust in God, and He never failed her.

When peace was at length restored to France, Emilie was not at once free to consecrate herself to God, as she had always intended to do. Her father, grandfather and brother had all lost their lives during the Revolution, and she undertook now to do what she could to secure the remains of the family estates for her two sisters and her mother. For this purpose she studied the necessary legal documents, went into the technicalities of the law, instructed the lawyers how to act, and gained lawsuit after lawsuit by her perseverance and energy, until bit by bit almost the whole property was regained.

Her intention had been to become a Poor Clare, but when Father Lambert came to preach in the Velay and told her of the Society of the Sacred Heart, she felt strongly drawn to join it. The first step was to go to Lyons to see Father Varin, but when she presented herself before him, her timidity and diffidence so veiled her true character that he thought Father Lambert had been mistaken in believing her called to the Society. His report of her to Mother Barat was very discouraging, but it was too late to draw back, and she pursued her way to Amiens, where she arrived in November, 1803. Here also she was at first thought good for very little, but by degrees her capacity was remarked, and Mother Barat before long discovered that she had "one of the best heads in the Society." We have seen what she was throughout the trials that preceded the crisis at Amiens, and now that all was arranged we shall find her a model of religious spirit, forming

house after house to the life and work of the Society. "Her admirable obedience," says one who knew her well, "made her in Mother Barat's hands a faithful messenger, who at a word or sign would fly from one end of France to the other, to Switzerland, to Italy, or wherever there was a house to found, a difficulty to solve, or a dispute to settle. It is impossible to count her journeys, journeys in those days, even at the best, very different from what they are now, and she always chose the cheapest mode of conveyance, in spite of its slowness and discomfort."

It was on one of these journeys, in a draughty and tumble-down conveyance, that Mother de Charbonnel's eyes received the injury that ended in total blindness.

CHAPTER XIX

THIRD GENERAL CONGREGATION. 1820.

The beginning and as it were the seed of that human perfection which Jesus Christ gave to mankind are to be found in the Christian education of the young. . . . Go on, therefore, in making the young your chief care.

LETTER OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE BISHOPS OF ENGLAND, DEC. 1885.

THE rapid increase of foundations made it advisable to complete the work of the General Congregation, of 1815, by providing a fixed and uniform course of studies for all the schools of the Society. Mother Barat, for this purpose, called together her Council and the Superiors of each house, inviting them to meet in Paris, in August, 1820. Only one was missing, and on July 10th, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Duchesne :

Though an invitation will be useless, I send you one nevertheless, if it were only to keep you *au courant* of our doings. I shall also send you the result of our deliberations ; many of them will be necessary to you, You will not be forgotten. We shall be busied about your affairs. I am sure that novices will be forthcoming, and that next spring we shall have the consolation of sending you assistance.

Father Varin wished that, besides the six members of the Council, all the Superiors should be convoked. We shall be a considerable number, you perceive, but my happiness will be incomplete without you, and we shall, more than once, visit St. Ferdinand in spirit. I am beginning to be uneasy at your silence. It is nearly three months since we have heard, and how long it seems ! We do not know whether you have taken possession of your house nor how you like it.

The Mothers who assembled in answer to this invitation were exceptionally well-fitted to deal with the subject before

them. Some, like Mother de Charbonnel, had inherited all the traditions that had made the old French provincial families models of a high-toned simplicity that may well be termed patriarchal. Others, like Mother de Gramont d'Aster, had known the Court under the *ancien régime*, and when the time of disaster came had seen how misfortune tries and strengthens what is good, and unmasks what is worthless. Whilst in exile in England, she had been obliged on her husband's death to support herself and her children, and for this purpose had opened at Richmond a school for English girls, the success of which enabled her to provide, not only for her own family, but for many others amongst the *emigrés*.

Mothers Geoffroy and Desmarquest were there to turn to good account their practical knowledge of girls of the middle class, and Mother de Lalanne to bring forward the treasures of her experience of the lives and needs of the poor. She had been especially invited by Mother Barat, who wrote to her: "I have the greatest desire to know you as well as your little community, whom I love dearly. We are reckoning on seeing you in Paris. All the Society is anxious to make your acquaintance, for our Mothers have heard much of your zeal and devotedness."

One of the reasons that urged Mother Barat to call so many persons together on this occasion, was that all might profit by Father Varin's presence in Paris to hear the instructions which he was to give, preparatory to the opening of the Congregation. He could look back to the very beginning of the little Society, even to the time when it only existed in the mind and heart of the saintly Father de Tournély, and he drew out for the benefit of his audience its rise and progress. He dwelt on the wonderful mercies God had shown to it, the almost miraculous protection that had preserved it through evil days, and the blessings of marvellous increase, vouchsafed since the fear of division was at an end. He then enlarged on the obligation that such graces laid on each member, and especially on those in authority. He made no secret of the dangers that contact with the world exposed them to,—dangers that could be safely met

only by an increase of interior spirit, a greater abnegation, and an ever stricter observance of their vow of Poverty.

"In poverty, simplicity, humility, abjection," he told them, "lie your closest ties to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His first home was a stable, and a manger His first resting-place. He laid the foundations of His Church in poverty. Your own origin was lowly, and your duration depends on your remaining poor. Let nothing be too good for what regards God and the service of the altar; let there be no stint in what charity requires for our neighbour and the children; but for yourselves, your clothing, food and lodging, every thing must be *poor*," and he repeated the last word over and over again to make it ring in the ears of those who were listening to him. Lastly, to bring the authority of St. Ignatius to support his words, he quoted his injunction that: "Any change with regard to the vow of Poverty must be to make it more stringent."

The Abbé Frayssinous held at this time a very distinguished position as a preacher amongst the clergy of France, and he became, a little later, Minister of Public Instruction. He was about this time made ecclesiastical Superior of the convent of the Sacred Heart in Paris, and came sometimes to the Rue des Postes to give the benefit of his advice and experience. His first visit was remembered for the warning words he uttered: "You wish to be true religious, whilst maintaining that intercourse with the world which your vocation requires. I may say that your undertaking is bold, nay, *daring*;" and he impressed upon those who heard him, the necessity of being always on their guard against the insidious influence which the world exerts, more or less insensibly, upon all who are in contact with it.

The Congregation opened on August the 15th. Father Varin was present, and the Abbé Perreau, ecclesiastical Superior General of the Society, presided at the meetings, which lasted for eight hours daily. Abbé Frayssinous occasionally assisted, and Father Loriquet, a Jesuit and an historian, came from Amiens to draw up the Plan of Studies.

In all truly Catholic education, the Sacred Heart of our

Lord is the centre to which all teaching must converge, the focus whence all good must radiate. Benedictines, Ursulines, nuns of the Visitation, and innumerable other Orders had educated many generations of girls before the Society of the Sacred Heart existed, and Mother Barat never failed to extol their devotedness and the fruit of their labours. It was very far from her intention to supplant these older Orders; her only desire was that her Institute—as the youngest-born and latest in the field—should labour with them shoulder to shoulder, stamping on its work the special character of consecration to the love of Jesus Christ, and profiting by the wide experience which the Fathers of the Society of Jesus had gained in their colleges.

Cardinal Wiseman, in one of his Pastorals, describes the scene—which he calls "the sweetest incident of our Redeemer's life"—when Jesus, taking a child, set him down in the midst of His disciples: "whom when He had embraced, He saith to them: Whoever receiveth *one* such child as this in My Name, receiveth Me:" and the Cardinal goes on to affirm that we have here the whole theory of Catholic education. "Jesus *embraced* that little child, His representative on earth; that is, He pressed it to His own living, beating Heart,—to that Heart which by every pulsation sends salvation and eternal life through the frame of the whole Church. . . . The child had nestled there, . . . and had come down again educated as contact with that adorable Heart alone can educate.

"Every child provided with a Catholic education is brought to the very Heart of our Lord, and educated there. Science and letters, if taught in His spirit, may indeed be as His two arms which raise the child from the earth, but religious and moral truth alone puts His seal upon all other teaching; and that seal is the pressure of His Sacred Heart, of its diamond strength and brilliancy, on the yet soft wax of the childish heart. . . .

"For, what is there in the Divine Heart of Jesus which you would not gladly transfuse into the child's, even though it may seem to be a pouring from a golden vessel into one of clay?

Would you not gladly enrich that little heart with some drops of His mildness, gentleness, patience; of His humility, meekness and sweetness; of His charity, affectionateness, tenderness; of His purity, innocence, holiness? And where are all these virtues to be found? He has told us, 'Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble *of heart*.' If the treasure-house of His humility is His Heart, if the school of His meekness is in His breast, there also reside those other virtues which you wish to infuse into the child's heart, there is the school at which you would have it trained. . . . If, then, the treasure of virtue is in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, thither speedily take the young heart to be filled. . . . Teach children there, train them there; . . . and you will indeed have done more than receive them in His Name, you will have taken them up in your arms only to place them in His." *

Such is the great aim which the Constitutions of the Society places before its members. To whatever class of life the children whom they teach may belong, they are all poor in one sense of the word, they are all God's little ones, and all come to be brought to His knowledge and love.

From this high aim it follows that the first characteristic of the spirit of the education given by the Society is that it is supernatural. As Father Varin reminded the Mothers present at the Congregation, the primary end of their Institute is not education, it is devotion to the Sacred Heart. Zeal for souls, shown chiefly in the work of education, necessarily flows from this no doubt; but this zeal is the effect, not the cause, of the existence of the Society.

Hence, whilst labouring to fit the children to take, later on, their place in the world, and do the incalculable good which the mother of a family can effect, if she is thoroughly trained in all religious and moral virtues, and devoted to home duties, the religious must "love to see in them souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and destined to reign eternally with Him." "Nothing must be left undone to ground them firmly in the faith, to inspire them with fear of God, and

* *Pastorals on Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, in connection with Education.* No, v.

horror of sin," and after this "to lead them to see in the Sacred Heart of Jesus the centre and source of that ardent love which made Him embrace, for their sakes, sufferings and a cruel death to save their souls and open Heaven to them."

Thus religion should be at once the foundation of their education and its crowning-point and, consequently, the chief subject taught. They must learn thoroughly the principles on which it rests; that they may be established in the practice of a true and solid piety, they must be deeply impressed with the idea that "true virtue consists in fulfilling the duties of our state, and that all piety which is not founded on this principle is but a most dangerous illusion." "By little acts of self-denial gently asked of them they should be gradually prepared to make to God, in after-life in the world, those more painful sacrifices which conscience and religion require. To train them to this spirit of generosity and sacrifice for God, the great mysteries of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, who offered Himself to His Father in sacrifice for our salvation, should often be put before their eyes."

The strength and solidity of this instruction is intended to counteract the natural instability of youth, for no one knew better than Mother Barat that "it is too common to meet with young people whose tender piety in the course of their religious education gave the fairest promise, and yet who in the world were soon carried away by the love of pleasure."

"Piety," says Bishop Hedley, in a work already quoted, "is a word that is much misunderstood, and even much abused. Counterfeit piety is detestable; true piety is the realization of our being's purpose. Piety is a tender and sensitive love of God, of our Blessed Lord, of the Mother of Jesus, of the Saints, and of holy things. It springs from faith, and leads to self-denial. It lives deep down in the heart, but it animates the body, shines in the eyes, moves the hands, and is felt in the voice. In a child it is sweet and lovely to see, although a child's piety may have many imperfections. It may be shallow, easily disturbed, subject to human respect, given to the service of the eye, and sometimes uninstructed and foolish.

Yet it is sweet to see, and great is the responsibility of those who cultivate it. . . . Genuine piety has three characteristics: it is self-denying, charitable, and courageous. It is self-denying, because self-indulgence or softness kills the true love of God. It is kind and charitable because it sees Jesus Christ in every creature. And it is courageous because human respect and the custom of the world soon extinguish the piety of a soul that is a coward."

To facilitate the task of forming in the hearts of children this genuine piety was the first aim set before themselves by those who framed the Constitutions of the Society concerning education. But they had another aim which if "only accessory is yet necessary in its degree," that of fitting the children by due cultivation of their minds to take that place in the world for which God destines them.

The religious are to reflect, the Constitutions say, "that the girls educated in their houses are destined in the ordinary course of Providence to become wives and mothers of families." To fit them for their after-life "they are to study and learn every thing that will be useful for one who is to serve God in the world," and these words open a wide field. A wife should be her husband's companion intellectually, and should therefore be able to enter into his interests and pursuits. A mother should be able to train her children's minds, and superintend their education. A lady in society should be able to gain influence by her conversation and writing. That she should do this her mind must be cultivated and her character formed, and the cultivation and formation which go to make up what is conveyed by the best sense of the words "a true lady" is what the education of the Sacred Heart aims at imparting.

The studies will be serious and solid, and such as will foster a desire for self-improvement and a taste for reading. The superstructure—both as regards studies and accomplishments—may vary according to natural capacity, taste, and social standing, but the groundwork will be the same for all. "Special attention shall be given to manual work, love and taste for which shall be instilled into all the pupils as the most

excellent means of guarding themselves from the dangers of a frivolous life in the world, and of fulfilling their duties later on by preferring the happiness of retirement and the home circle to exciting pleasures and a worldly life." They should also be given a knowledge of domestic economy suited to their age and their future position in the world.

The Constitutions provide also for the intellectual formation of the mistresses. Studies to fit them for teaching are entered upon in the second year of noviceship, and are carried on afterwards for a shorter or longer time as previous training and other circumstances may make necessary. These studies must be so arranged as not to prejudice the life of recollection and prayer to which all are bound as religious, and their limits will be regulated according to the standard of education in the country. Knowledge is to be pursued as a means to an end, and only desired as called for by the spirit of the Institute for labouring, in all humility, for the service of others and the glory of the Heart of Jesus. Father Varin, speaking on this subject, warned the Mothers "to avoid the absurdity of setting themselves up for learned women;" and Mother Barat wrote: "It is essential that you should be well-informed if you are to teach your children; but be moderate in your studies. What use would it be for us to have taught all the sciences, and lost so much time in learning them, if we could not at the same time arouse the conscience and give the word of life to the soul?"

But more than mistresses to train its mind, the child needs for its education a mother's love and care, and that intuition of its wants which only deep love can give. Our Lord has always put into the hearts of His religious—who have left every thing for Him—this deep love for their pupils which in all ages of Christianity, but especially since the Reformation, has made the Church entrust them with the work of the education of children. The religious of the Sacred Heart are enjoined by their rule to be *mothers*, not mere governesses, to their children, and this is especially the case with regard to the Mistress General of the school. "Entrusted as she is by the parents with parental

authority, she shall have for all the children a mother's tender heart, gently encouraging them to be good, and loving them all alike in the Sacred Heart. Besides the care of their instruction and religious training, she watches over their health, food, clothing, and every thing else conducive to their well-being."

This slender outline is quite insufficient fully to set forth the educational system of the Sacred Heart, but at least it indicates the chief lines and prevailing spirit. Mother Barat's ideal was a very high one, and in her hands the system, as elaborated under her supervision, produced astonishing results. It would be over-bold to assert that everywhere and always it obtains its full effect, for there are countless ways in which God's work is hampered. The essential thing is that the Society should preserve its primitive spirit. As long as it does this Mother Barat's prayer, repeated in the hearts of all her daughters, will be heard and answered. "The labour and humiliation for me; the glory for the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Other questions occupied the attention of the General Congregation. A school rule was drawn up, a ceremonial arranged, and a Summary of the Constitutions, the work of Father Varin, was read and adopted. When the statistics of the work hitherto effected were compiled, it was found that the Society had received without dowry, in its twenty years of existence, three hundred and eighty-three subjects. Mother de Gramont d'Aster, noting the fact, exclaimed: "How God has blessed the Society, and how wonderful He is in His gifts." The poor schools of the Society were, in the same spirit, reckoned amongst its treasures, and the number was increased.

The growth of the school, noviceship, and community in Paris made it necessary to remove into a larger house. Sixty children filled the convent in the Rue des Postes, and many had to be refused. About an equal number of nuns and novices lived in the Rue de l'Arbalète, but were much over-crowded. One of the first subjects discussed by the Congregation was this removal, and the search for a suitable house was begun. It was necessary it should be large, but Mother Barat would have liked to combine space with simplicity. It was only after

many doubts, and consulting all those best able to decide, that she began to treat seriously for the purchase of the Hotel Biron, the only available house of sufficient size to be met with at that time. It was built in the reign of Louis XV., and had passed from one hand to another, until, at the beginning of the century, its owner, the old Duc de Charost, ended there a peaceful life of study and good works. At his death, his widow wished to sell it, and proposed the purchase to the Society at a moderate price. But though the price was moderate for the size of the house and grounds, it was far beyond the resources that the Society could command. The General Congregation discussed the matter, and at last decided to appeal for help to the King, through a novice who had lately entered and was well known and respected at Court. She was the widow of Comte de Marbœuf, who had been Governor of Corsica, and she had entered the Society of the Sacred Heart late in life. Throughout her long widowhood her charity had been exercised in various ways, but especially by providing for the education of more than four hundred young men for the priesthood. Her only son, a colonel in the French army, met his death during the Russian campaign, and from that moment the great object of her life was to free his soul from Purgatory. Her prayers and sacrifices were unremitting, and when she had given all, she gave herself also, and entered the Society. To one so practised in self-sacrifice, religious life came almost naturally. "From this day forward," she said to Mother Barat, "I shall put an extinguisher on my own understanding, and look at things only in the light of yours."

She was quite ready to execute the commission which the Congregation entrusted her with, and, accompanied by her son-in-law, the Comte d'Ambrugeac, she went to the Tuileries. Her embassy was successful, and Louis XVIII. gave £4,000 towards the purchase of the Hotel Biron. The rest was borrowed, and the house became the property of the Society on September 5th, 1820. Mother Barat went to see it with Mother Bigeu, who was to be Superior, and some who were with her wished to settle upon some convenient and suitable rooms

for the Superior General and the local Superior. Mother Barat cut short the proposed arrangement by saying that only the children were to be lodged in the Hotel Biron; the religious were to occupy the rooms formerly set apart for the servants.

The holidays had begun, but twenty-five of the pupils still remained at the Rue des Postes, and on the 10th of October, Father Varin, having said Mass for the last time in the little chapel, prepared them for the change that was coming. "You are leaving this chapel," he said, "where you made your First Communion, but you are not leaving our Lord. He has taken possession of the house to which you are going, and is waiting to welcome you there. When you pass over its threshold do not think only of what first strikes your eyes, but let them rest lovingly on the tabernacle where He dwells. This house belonged to the great ones of the earth; it is a palace, but a palace offered to our Lord, to the God who willed for us to be born in a stable, to the God whose temples have too often been sacrilegiously turned into stables." After Benediction the school and community removed to the Hotel Biron. When they first entered it, the pictures, mirrors, and gilding were still there, and the children's delight knew no bounds. But the day after, all the decorations had disappeared, and no gilding remained except in the room used as a chapel.

According to Mother Barat's decision the out-buildings and offices were assigned to the community and noviceship. The stables were used as the community-room; the small low rooms set apart for the nuns still bore the names and marks of their former occupants, the cooks, scullions, grooms, barbers, and footmen of the palmy days of the Hotel Biron. Mother Barat was quite satisfied, and wrote: "We are not, thank God, better lodged at the Hotel Biron than elsewhere, and there is no magnificence about our quarters in the stables. I hope we shall practise poverty here, and I do not see that any of us love this house better than the poorest of our houses."

When, soon after the novices had removed there from the Rue de l'Arbalète, Father Varin paid them his first visit, he asked on what day they had come there. When he heard that

it was on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi he smiled : " Rather a fine house to come to on the feast of the Poor Man of Assisi. What would he have said to you, I wonder ? " And then he went on to tell how St. Francis had paid a visit to a newly-founded convent of his Order, and was scandalized to find it so large and handsome. " Let us be off," he said to his companion, " one of the poor of Jesus Christ cannot rest here ;" and so saying he withdrew, and spent the night in a barn on the roadside. " If St. Francis came here," Father Varin continued, " I am afraid he would not feel quite at home in this grand house. But when he saw the part you have taken for yourselves he would acknowledge you for his Sisters in Jesus Christ." And he told them that when people expressed astonishment to him at his spiritual children being where they were, his answer was : " It is true they are in the Hotel Biron, but they do not live in it."

Mother Barat's love for Poverty only increased now that the outward circumstances of the Society had changed, and she lost no opportunity of testifying how deep was her affection for all that savoured of lowliness and humility. One day at the Rue des Postes she was sweeping the hall, instead of one of the lay-sisters. The Duc de Montmorency had come to speak to her about the purchase of the Hotel Biron, and stood watching her for a short time unperceived. " Ah, Madame Barat, I have caught you," he said at last ; " what are you about ? " " What I ought to have been doing all my life, Monsieur le Duc," she answered, " if I had been left in my right place," and she laid down her broom and followed him into the parlour.

The General Congregation broke up in the middle of October, and as usual the elections took place just before the close. Mother Ducis, niece of the well-known poet of that name, replaced Mother Duchesne as Secretary to Mother Barat. Mothers de Charbonnel, Bigeu, and Grosier were elected Assistants General.

CHAPTER XX

MORE FOUNDATIONS. 1822–1825.

God sees the golden harvest of pain in the ages of eternity.
BISHOP HEDLEY.

WE can scarcely do more than name in rapid succession the foundations that followed on the close of the Third General Congregation. Mother Duchesne attributed to Aloysia's prayers the blessing on her work in America. A new house was founded at Grand Coteau in Louisiana, of which Eugénie Audé was named Superior. In France, foundations were made at Le Mans, Autun, Besançon, and Metz. In 1823, an old monastic building at Turin, called the *Crucifix*, was given to the Society, and Mother Bigeu went there with a community.

The year 1822 brought the unexpected joy of the return to to the Society of Mother de Peñeranda and most of her community, and this happiness was in great measure due to one whose relations with Mother Barat were to be life-long and very intimate. Pauline de Limminghe belonged to an illustrious Belgian family, but she seemed born to suffering. The whole of her long life was passed beneath the weight of the Cross, and it often pressed on her account upon those whom she loved best. Her early life was saddened by the imprisonments which her father underwent at the hands of the Revolution and, a little later, of Napoleon. The second imprisonment was shared by all his family, and its severity nearly cost Pauline her life. From her childhood, she seems to have had an idea of consecrating herself to God, but, however this may be, during their captivity she promised to become a nun if her father were

restored to liberty. When this at length took place, she told her parents of her promise, but they only sought to take off her thoughts from a subject so distressing to them. For this purpose they planned a journey through Italy, but they had only reached Nice when both father and mother died on the same day, after a few hours of sudden illness. Pauline went from the death-bed of one to that of the other, letting neither know of the other's danger. "I will wear mourning for them all my life," was her resolve on that sad day. She was at this time twenty years old, and, shortly afterwards, in 1813, she entered the noviceship at Dooresele. Nothing was said to her, before she made her vows, of the change at that time going on with regard to the Society, and directly after her Profession she took up the work of the Mistress General, who was amongst those who, only two days previously, had returned to Amiens. Her work with the children was eminently successful, but from the time she discovered the true position of affairs she had no rest, and was continually praying for light and guidance.

Two years later, the anti-religious Government of the Low Countries made the position of the Dooresele community untenable. Mother de Peñeranda announced to the community the conditions under which they could continue to exist, but said that she herself should refuse to comply, and that each one could either leave or remain, as she thought best.

Mother de Limminghe was the first to declare her intention to leave, but her real object was to rejoin the Society of the Sacred Heart. She went to Paris, where Mother Barat received her with all possible kindness. She begged to be admitted into the Society, and when Mother Barat asked her on what footing she wished to enter, she answered: "As the last and lowest; I have come to begin my noviceship." After a month's retreat, she entered, and very soon received the habit. "Until then," she writes, "I had avoided exerting any influence on the scattered members of the Dooresele community, but about this time I heard that Mother de Peñeranda and Mother Henriette Coppens had gone to Holland to make a foundation,

and had failed in the attempt. I asked leave of Mother Barat to write to them, inviting them to come to Paris. They answered by coming immediately, and were received by her with the tenderness of a true Mother." Mother Barat was indeed overjoyed at this return, and when Mother de Peñeranda expressed with many tears her deep sorrow for the past, and begged to be received back into the Society, she embraced her with tears of joy. "Oh, I wish they would all come back like this!" was the exclamation that came from the depths of her warm heart.

An appeal which Mother de Peñeranda sent to the different members of the dispersed community of Dooresele led to the return of seventeen amongst them, and all entered the noviceship in Paris.* From first to last the difference between these and the other novices was in their zeal for seeking greater perfection. Mother de Peñeranda, and Mothers de Limminghe and Henriette Coppens all only sought the last place, and had no wish to shorten their time of probation. But Mother Barat decided otherwise. On the 23rd of January, 1823, Mother de Peñeranda made her Profession in the Society of the Sacred Heart, and shortly afterwards Mothers de Limminghe and Coppens did the same. Mother de Peñeranda was sent as Superior to Beauvais. Mother Henriette Coppens, who had been Mistress of Novices at Dooresele, was made sub-Mistress of the Paris novices, and Mother de Limminghe went as Mistress General of the School to help Mother Bigeu in her arduous work at Turin. In August, Mother Barat wrote to her: "Try to strengthen what is weak in yourself, to be less vehement, to grow calm, to take even vexations peacefully; it is the best way to put things straight. Humility of heart and self-forgetfulness will help you on this road, and prayer will certainly make you reach the goal. God never refuses a grace which He wishes to impart, provided we pray for it."

Thus opened a correspondence which was to last for forty years, and which shows us with great clearness the leading

* The community at Dooresele was reconstituted shortly afterwards by a few who remained in Belgium, and it still exists under the name of *Dames de l'Instruction Chrétienne.*

features of the character of Mother de Limminghe. Her humility enabled Mother Barat to tell her home-truths with marvellous directness, and she never failed to do so. We find her over and over again correcting in her a tendency to look only on the gloomy side of things, to fret unnecessarily over faults in herself and others, and to be led by her high ideal of perfection to exceed sometimes in severity. But we see also how imbued she was with the spirit of self-sacrifice and with love for God, and how many other great gifts she possessed, which won for her Mother Barat's entire confidence. The name *Addolorata*, which she assumed in later life out of devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows, gives the key to the tone of her spiritual life, and indeed in a certain way to her whole personality.

In the course of 1822, Mother Barat had visited the houses of Grenoble, Lyons, Chambéry and Autun. From there her route to Paris led her through Joigny at the end of September. "The grapes are ripe," she wrote to her nephew, "but they will not be gathered before we come. The sight of the vintage will awaken many old recollections; but how quickly all changes and passes away. My wish for you is that, like us, you would look on this earth only as a place of banishment." Many changes had indeed taken place at Joigny. Mother Barat's old home was now quite desolate, for her mother had died in the previous June. She had had the great comfort and consolation of her son's presence, but Mother Barat would not allow herself what the Constitutions refused henceforth to the other members of her Society. She accepted for herself, as for them, the hardest sacrifice imposed by the Rule, that of remaining away from the death-bed of even father or mother. The prayers she could say or obtain for her mother's soul were her only consolation in so great a grief.

Traces of this sorrow and others—amongst them the death of Monsieur Montaigne— often appear in her letters at this time. "What a life we lead!" she wrote to Mother Prevost. "When we are midway through our course, we have only tears to give our friends. Every thing vanishes from beside us." "Let us belong to God alone," she said to another, "belong

entirely to Him for life and for death. Our lamp shone dimly until now, because the oil that fed it was not pure. May its last beams be brighter and warmer; that is, my child, let us get rid of every thing earthly, that we may love our God purely and generously, and belong only to Him."

Another source of suffering at this time was the unsatisfactory state of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut under the government of Mother Thérèse Maillucheau, and the more she learnt of the details the more they grieved her. The life of Mother Thérèse was passed rather in Heaven than on earth, and she had not the power that Mother Barat so eminently possessed, of uniting this life of union with God with the capacity for dealing practically with concerns of everyday existence. Great expenses had been incurred which she saw no means of meeting, and debts had accumulated to an overwhelming extent. But it was not only the temporal affairs of the house which were in disorder. Since Aloysia's death, Mother Thérèse had lived in a continual desire to follow her to Heaven, and this longing had taken off her thoughts more than ever from earth. Both the community and the school suffered grievously from this. Religious spirit in the former, and discipline in the latter were much impaired, and the enclosure was not maintained as it should have been. Aloysia had been buried in a vault near the chapel, and her reputation for sanctity, increased by the numerous and striking graces obtained through her intercession, brought many to pray by her grave. All who wished it were allowed access to the spot, though it was within the enclosure, and the bad results of this were increased by the publicity given to the miracles she worked. Mother Barat's repeated warnings had been misunderstood, and her wise advice unheeded. She removed Mother Thérèse from Sainte-Marie, and sent her to Quimper where she did great good. But the Superior who succeeded her soon fell ill, and as Mother Barat's presence became necessary, she set off in February, 1823. Her health had already suffered very much from the sorrow that the mismanagement at Grenoble and the debts incurred had caused her, and she was unequal to the journey, especially at that time

of year. How much she dreaded it we see from a letter she wrote to Mother Geoffroy, when she began to foresee that it would be necessary. "I cannot tell you how I shrink from the prospect of travelling in this bad weather and with so much trouble before me. I try to overcome this dislike by thinking of our Lady's journey to Bethlehem, and the stable that awaited her. The journey is an evil only for the body ; the other part is much worse. *Fiat!*" A month later she wrote again : "I recommend my journey to your prayers. My heart is very heavy ; it feels beforehand coming sorrow. Like St. Martin I say : *Non recuso laborem*, but nature recoils."

Soon after her arrival at Sainte-Marie, Father Varin wrote to her :

Paris, March 10th, 1823.

You left the Cross in Paris, and you find it again at Grenoble. It must follow you and be with you always, that you may be able to say with St. Paul : "With Christ I am nailed to the Cross." I saw by your last letter to Mother de Charbonnel, that you did not venture to speak of all you had to grieve you. May I say, that perhaps you concentrate your trouble too much within your own heart ? It is an old habit of yours, and thus the sword wears out the scabbard. I wish that, as your oldest and most devoted friend in our Lord, I could give consolation to your soul. Nothing indeed would be more fitting. Who should feel for all you have to bear, more than he whom God made use of to launch you on so stormy a sea ? I do not feel it enough to say, as I always do : Courage and confidence, but I would fain obtain a large measure of both for you from our Lord, and induce Him to sweeten and alleviate the yoke He has laid on you, and which you bear for love of Him. [After having reassured her on a point which caused her uneasiness, he continues :] As to the rest, our Lord gives you many consolations. All goes well in your house in Paris, the good name of the novitiate is growing, the Flemings are all edifying, the school prosperous.

It would be difficult to describe the extreme sensitiveness of Mother Barat's nature, and she grieved deeply at having to inflict so much pain upon Mother Thérèse, who suffered intensely when she realized the extent of the distress which her ill-advised measures had brought upon her Superior.

"It will be ten years before this house is free from the misery of debt," Mother Barat wrote; "and how we ought to guard against that evil. It always involves loss of religious spirit." In the endeavour to throw off the load of care, which the sense of increasing illness made more burdensome, Mother Barat set to work with an almost feverish activity. "With God's help we shall get on," she wrote. "I have done nothing yet, but I have looked about me, laid my plans, and matured them in prayer. I am confident that things will come right little by little, and as far as is possible with the weak instruments we have in this house." "My health has been shaken by the journey," she wrote again, "and perhaps also by anxiety. *Fiat*, always *fiat;* God wished to show that He can do without us. All goes best then; if any good comes, I shall be forced to ascribe it to His goodness and mercy alone.

Winter lingers long among the mountains, and in March the snow was still deep about Sainte-Marie. The hard weather was a source of great suffering to Mother Barat, whose chest was very delicate. She made no complaint, but in her weak health it told upon her, and her letters show that she was impressed with the idea that her time on earth was short. She wrote to her nephew Stanislaus in March, 1823: "If you had some money to throw away I should have invited you to pay our mountains a visit. It is often very pleasant amongst them. The valley of Grésivaudan, where Bayard's old castle still stands, recalls interesting memories. But there are hardly any remains of the ancient spirit of French chivalry left, least of all at Grenoble; and so we like to forget the things of earth, and think of Heaven, our true country; every thing tells us that we shall soon be going home. Heaven is the best place to meet in spirit those from whom we are parted on earth; for it is there that one day we shall all be together again."

A few days after this letter was written, Mother Barat was much worse, and her life was even in danger. Fervent prayers were offered up continually in all the houses of the Society. For more than forty days the fever ran its course,

but just when it seemed that nature must have succumbed, the danger passed away. This recovery was attributed to the action of one of the pupils at Amiens, Mother Barat's youngest niece, Dosithée Dussausoy, who offered her life for that of her aunt.

Dosithée was at this time fourteen years old, a child whose intelligence and many gifts reminded Father Barat of the little Sophie of old days, and made him hope that she would tread in the same path. When she heard of her aunt's illness she was full of concern, and said one day to those around her: "Of what use am I for the glory of God? I shall ask Him to take me instead of her, and I shall pray so fervently that I hope I shall be heard." A slight attack of fever came on, and she was sent to the infirmary. Improved accounts of Mother Barat reached Amiens, and Dosithée was told of them. "If my aunt is better, I shall be worse," was her only comment, but shortly afterwards she said to one of her schoolfellows who came to see her: "Give me a kiss, this is good-bye." As there was nothing alarming in Dosithée's symptoms, her friend only laughed, and Dosithée said nothing more. On the 2nd of May, those of her mistresses who went to see her were surprised and touched at her unusually loving ways. On the following day the character of the illness suddenly changed, and the symptoms grew very alarming. She became unconscious, and only recovered sufficiently to go to confession. The next day, May 4th, Dosithée expired.

On this same 4th of May, the doctor who was attending Mother Barat at Grenoble, secretary and professor of the *Académie des Sciences* in that town, wrote to the medical attendant of the school at Amiens: "After an illness of forty-five days, with several relapses, Mother Barat is convalescent. Unless any complication occurs, which I see no reason to anticipate, she will soon be well. It was enteric or gastric fever. Words matter little, for whatever it was *it is over now*."

The coincidence of the date of this letter and that of Dosithée's death was a light for Mother Prevost. She wrote to Mother Audé: "Our Mother is recovering from an illness that

has lasted two months. We were very nearly losing her, and every thing made us fear we should do so. But God heard our prayers, and accepted the sacrifice of her youngest niece, who, when she heard that her aunt was dangerously ill, offered herself to our Lord to be taken in her stead, saying that God's glory had no need of her."

On hearing of Mother Barat's illness, Mothers de Charbonnel and Eugénie de Gramont had left Paris to go with all speed to Grenoble. They hoped to have been able to bring her back to Paris, but when they found her too ill to travel, they waited on, and returned with her to the Hotel Biron early in June.

Before leaving Grenoble, Mother Barat paid a last visit to Aloysia's grave,—the innocent cause of mischief to Sainte-Marie through the veneration it excited. We read in the Life of St. John Capistran, that when he feared the miracles worked at the tomb of a holy Franciscan lay-brother, would interfere with the process of canonization of St. Bernardine of Sienna, he commanded him in virtue of holy obedience to abstain from working any more marvels, and he was obeyed. Mother Barat's humility took alarm at the favours obtained through Aloysia's intercession, for she dreaded any thing that led out of the beaten path of lowliness and poverty, and she besought her to work no more henceforth. Aloysia obeyed in death as she had in life, and no more miraculous answers to prayer were obtained at her grave.

On her way to Paris Mother Barat passed through Joigny, and was the first to console her sister for Dosithée's death. This was a great surprise to the Mothers who were with her as, to avoid giving her a shock, her niece's illness had never been spoken of to her.

On the 22nd of June she wrote from Paris to Mother Duchesne :

I want to reassure you as to my recovery, dear Mother ; I am better, and getting well. I shall very soon be up to the mark after many months of suffering and extreme weakness. What sorrow I have had in that house upon the mountain ! It is over. Let us say no more about it, and hope that Divine Providence will come to our

aid. . . . Ask them all to pray for me, and do so yourself, that I may make better use of the life God has given back to me. Yesterday Amélie Jouve made her vows, and her brother Henry came to the ceremony. It was touching to see the two whom Aloysia has won for our Lord, making their offering on the day of her patron saint.

On August the 7th, she wrote again :

I had to set to work upon foundations as soon as I had recovered strength. The one at Turin is begun ; Mother Bigeu has just set off to open the school. Mother de Charbonnel has taken possession of the former house of the Governor at Besançon, where a school will be opened in November. Our chapel, one of the nicest in Paris, will be finished at the end of this month. You see all is prospering, and I should be too happy if it were not for the anxiety of debts.

The rest of the year 1823 and the beginning of 1824 were occupied by the affairs of the new house at Besançon. Mother de Charbonnel left Paris again very soon after her return there from Grenoble, and when the first difficulties had been overcome Mother de Rozeville was sent to take charge of the house. Mother Barat wrote to her in July, 1824 :

The flowers offered me for my feast brought thorns with them : at Besançon, every one laid up with illness, and you at the head of them. Here, Mother de Charbonnel down with fever ! All this took off from our joy. The trial was sweetened, however, by the fact that neither here nor at Besançon is the illness dangerous. Yet many things suffer from such little visitations, and nature dreads them. I am afraid that anxiety helped yours on. I cannot blame you, but I wish you had more strength and courage. It would be unjust of me to require this of you all at once, but until you get it, there is one way to supply for all you need : unalterable confidence in God, founded on humility. Act as an instrument, leave the success to Him who has given you the work to do. When once this secret has been found out, superiority loses its chief difficulty, and success follows. Faults and want of experience lead to mistakes, no doubt, but God repairs the harm done, and the mistakes turn to good if we humble ourselves and do not lose confidence. Join to this, my dear child, the spirit of prayer. Often draw near to the Heart of Jesus : you will find there light, strength and perseverance in your good resolutions. I join my too weak prayers to yours, that you may obtain all these graces.

The foundation at Metz was made by receiving into the Society an Association known as the *Dames de Sainte-Sophie*, eighteen of whom took the habit early in 1824. Mother Barat paid them a visit in September of that year, and won all hearts. Forty years afterwards the impression produced by her sanctity and kindness had not faded from the minds of those who at the time of her visit were children in the school.

The foundation at Bordeaux was a similar one to that of Metz, as there also a Congregation already formed, joined the Society. When Mother Duchesne and her companions stayed in the port before embarking for Louisiana, they had been most hospitably entertained by the foundress of this Association, Madame Vincent, who, with all her little community, already wished to become a nun of the Sacred Heart, and from that time forward, without any authorization, had assumed both the name and religious habit of the Society, copying also, as far as possible, its works, customs, and Rule. This gave rise to much confusion and many misconceptions. Mother Barat wrote to Mother Emilie Giraud:

I find I must go to Bordeaux. Madame Vincent wishes to join us, and people advise us to consent if our conditions are accepted, and thus end the kind of scandal that arises from the existing state of things. I must confess that I would just as soon have left them their liberty. God is the common Father of all, and, like your Mother Geoffroy, I delight in seeing Him loved and glorified by every one who has a mind to do so. Many persons think we ought to stand on our rights. This is the way mistakes are made, and this pretext leads to many abuses. It is better to unite. Pray and get prayers for this intenion.

Mother Barat went to Bordeaux in May, 1825. She spent some days with Mother de Lalanne and her community, and afterwards with Madame Vincent, when the affair of the affiliation was concluded. With her wonted prudence, she foresaw all the difficulties that might arise, drew up her plans, and entrusted the execution of them to Mother de Charbonnel. The letter in which she gave her the instructions necessary for the task before her ended thus: "I leave that to the zeal and wisdom of my good Assistant, whom I wish I had not to burden

with this cross. At least we will pray for her with all our hearts, and I shall use my utmost endeavours to relieve her from it as soon as I can prudently do so."

Mother de Charbonnel arrived at Bordeaux in July, and carried out the instructions she had received. For some years the two foundations—those of Mother de Lalanne and Madame Vincent—existed side by side, but in 1833, Quadrille, the site of the present convent, became the property of the Society, and both communities and their schools were then united under one roof.

CHAPTER XXI

APPROBATION OF THE SOCIETY.
FOURTH GENERAL CONGREGATION. 1826–1827.

O Mother of Mercy, the restless and unstable world is under thy feet! It trusteth to thee, and, with devout appeal, prayeth thee to be its intercessor with the Sun of Justice, Who loved thee above all others. — ST. BERNARD.

IN August, 1823, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Duchesne: "I am going to whisper a secret into your ear, but it must not be known openly yet, on account of the delays and difficulties we may meet with. We are seriously thinking of obtaining the Holy Father's approbation. Pray and get prayers that we may succeed, but do not speak of it yet."

"Approbation of Religious Orders," says Mgr Baunard, "was reserved to the Holy See by the Fourth Council of Lateran, in 1215. It enrols the Congregation so approved in the regular army of the Church militant, and confers more weighty authority and a higher sanction upon the Constitutions; nay more, it guarantees their inviolability, by protecting them from the attack of any rash innovation. Hence it is also a guarantee for unity; rules, thus protected, will be the same everywhere, and an Order approved by the Holy See shares the notes that characterize the true Church. It will be one, immutable, independent, and universal."

Pius VII., after all that he had suffered and done for the Church, was still sitting on the Chair of Peter, but a few days after the letter above quoted was written, he ended his long and glorious pontificate. He had so often given proofs of paternal kindness to the Society that many hopes were grounded

thereon, and Mother Barat had sent to Rome, in the course of the summer, the documents necessary to open negotiations. The fears of delay caused by his death were soon removed by the encouragement which his successor, Leo XII., gave to the petition, and, early in 1824, the affair was in progress. Cardinal Consalvi, in spite of his affliction at the death of Pope Pius VII., presented the request for approbation to Leo XII., and promised that, on his return to Rome, he would not let a week pass without urging on the work of the examination of the Constitutions. This had been taken in hand by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and especially by their Prefect, Cardinal Pacca. But Cardinal Consalvi was soon called to rejoin in a better world the master whom, in good and evil days, he had so faithfully served on earth, and, after his death, the affair for a time seemed lost sight of amidst the press of other business.

At the end of 1825, Mother Barat was advised to obtain the help of a Postulator accredited by herself, who should urge forward the matter by his own exertions. The work was undertaken by a young Belgian ecclesiastic recently ordained in Rome, Mgr de Mercy d'Argenteau, to whom the new Pope had already on account of his high qualities shown special favour. The new postulator attached two conditions to his acceptance: (1) that Mother Barat herself should write him a special letter giving him authority in this matter; (2) that she should send to Rome a religious of the Society, well versed in the spirit of the Institute, to assist him in his work. Mother Barat hastened to comply with both these requests, and chose Mother Bigeu, who was then at Turin, for the important mission. The Superior at Chambéry, Mother Lavauden, was to accompany her. Mother Bigeu was in bad health but this did not prevent her from immediately setting about her preparations for departure.

Before she started she received the following letter from Mother Barat:

Paris, November 18th, 1825.

I hope this letter will reach you before you leave Turin, as my first injunction is to tell you to take Sister Fonsala with you. I had no

idea you were ill : we had been so rejoicing at your recovery, and now another break-down, and at such a moment ! We must put all our trust in God and in His providence, but none the less shall I be very uneasy as long as your journey lasts. The Sacred Heart of Jesus will bless it, I hope, since you undertake it for Him and in His Name. You will find all your instructions in Rome. I shall send them and the letter for Mgr d'Argenteau by the safest way. You are not going to an unknown land : you will have the advantage of Father de Rozaven's advice and direction. I envy your lot. . . . We shall pray and get prayers for you, the great work you are engaged on is so important a one for the Society. Write often and take all possible care of yourself. Mother Lavauden will be your secretary when you are not able to write yourself.

After her arrival in Rome early in December, Mother Bigeu heard again from Mother Barat.

Paris, December 13th, 1825.

The news of your journey, dear Mother, gave us the greatest pleasure. We thank God that travelling does not tire you too much, and that your health is even improved. I well understand that rest is good for body and soul, but, alas, the Sacred Heart of Jesus does not seem to intend it for us. Living as we do at the beginning of this little Society, we must all devote ourselves to labour, perhaps until the very last day of our lives. However, we must have confidence ; our Lord will measure His grace to our needs ; I hope this from His infinite goodness for you and for myself, who am so wretched and so poor, and yet am obliged to go on as long as He wills.

When Mother Bigeu arrived in Rome she was unaware that the Society had already obtained a Laudatory Brief, spoken of in the next letter she received from Mother Barat as an approbation. Although it was not all that she wanted, Mother Barat was very grateful for it, and wrote on December 24th of that year to Mother Prevost : " Let us thank our Lord for it ; it is a most consoling thing for us. It is true it is not a solemn approbation, but the laws of our country make that impossible. What matter ? The essential thing for us is to be assured that the common Father of the faithful acknowledges us as his daughters, and approves the laws we follow. We are on the right road."

The next day she wrote to Mother Bigeu :

To-day's post brought me your first letter from Rome ! Thank God, your journey has gone well. Yesterday a despatch reached me from the same city giving me the wholly unexpected news of our approbation. . . . If this is sufficient and there is no means of obtaining another for a long time, your stay in Rome will be much shortened. However, take advantage of it to obtain all the instructions that will be useful to us later on. It is surprising that as our affairs were concluded on September 2nd, no one should have given even a hint of it to Father Rozaven. God had His designs in leading you into this first city of the world ; no doubt we shall know them later. In the present state of France it certainly seems impossible to obtain what is looked on in Rome as a solemn approbation. We could not fulfil the obligations it imposes with regard to enclosure and vows, as the law recognizes no solemn vows. We are advised to be satisfied for the time being, with what has been granted us ; you will see what Father Perreau thinks of it from the copy of his letter which I enclose. You will discuss all this with your wise council, and let us know the result. It will then be our turn to weigh every thing, and our Lord will give us grace to act for His greater glory.

Mother Bigeu's surprise on receipt of this letter was very great, and great also was her embarrassment. Her inquiries soon led her to the conclusion that the Laudatory Brief issued with the sanction of the Holy See in September by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars was insufficient. Father Rozaven even maintained that it was equivalent to the refusal of a more solemn approbation. The various opinions held on the subject led to a wearisome correspondence, and Mother Bigeu's position grew more and more difficult. The true state of things was not known in Paris, and the instructions she received did not adequately meet the case. Months passed away, and her health suffered from so much anxiety and the uncertainty how to act for the best. It was not until April that things began to clear. The usual time that should elapse between the Laudatory Brief and solemn approbation is ten years, but, acting on the advice of Father Rozaven, Mgr d'Argenteau sounded the Holy Father, and found him favourably disposed to proceed more quickly. What carried

all before it, however, was a Memoir drawn up by Mother Barat and presented to Leo XII., on May 5th. He read it with great attention, and the same day appointed a Commission of Cardinals to examine and pronounce upon the matter. The members of the Commission were Cardinals Pacca, Bertazzoli, Pedecini, and the Archbishop of Ancyra, who was Secretary to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

Mother Bigeu writes of every thing to Mother Barat:

Our hopes [she says] were raised by seeing that the great work would go on during our Lady's month; and to draw down her protection we never failed to attend the May devotions, so fervently carried out here. We asked that a novena to the Sacred Heart should be begun at the Gesù, and many persons joined in it. I put my trust in this and in the special prayers you have asked for from our Mothers and Sisters, as well as on the blessings which your cares and labours will bring upon our work.

When I learnt whom the Holy Father had elected to form the Commission, I was very uneasy. I knew that Cardinal Bertazzoli was against us, inasmuch as he did not approve of our being without strict enclosure, gratings, &c.; and besides, he feared that the state of France would again lead to the dispersion of nuns. The Archbishop of Ancyra was not more favourable to us. I should have wished to sound them, and perhaps explain things, but here it is necessary to proceed slowly; it is a principle of wisdom in business matters, and when we try to hasten things they say: *E la furia francese* (we translate this *la fougue française*). Mine has been well kept in check, I assure you. Only at the end of May, was it judged expedient that I should pay a visit to each of the members of the Commission. I went with Mother Lavauden; and Monsieur de Crosat, Sardinian Minister to the Vatican, accompanied us. Their Eminences received us with all possible kindness. "I foresaw," Cardinal Bertazzoli said graciously, "that you would not be satisfied with our praises, and that you would ask for something more." He brought forward several objections, in answer to which I explained our customs and the reasons for which we had adopted them. After many polite speeches on his part, I ventured to say; "Then I may write to my Superior General that there is hope for us?" "Yes," he answered, "well-grounded hope. You will have a Brief as soon as possible. The Pope likes your work, he has told me so." How can I describe, Reverend Mother, what I felt at

that moment! The Sacred Heart had in an instant changed the heart of this Prince of the Church; from an opponent he had become a promotor. Monsieur de Crosat, who had dreaded this visit, said as we were leaving: "How providential! This is the change of the right Hand of the Most High!" But shall we obtain an equally good hearing from the Archbishop Secretary? We were speedily reassured on this point also. Our interview led to a complete change of mind on his part. He saw that our Constitutions were calculated to increase the glory of the Sacred Heart, and before taking my leave of him I had the consolation of hearing him say: "It is clearly the work of God for the times we live in. We must beware of interfering with it!" Evidently God has taken our cause in hand; the Sovereign Pontiff has expressed his desire, the Spirit of the Lord speaks to all, and all have declared for a pure and simple approbation.

On the 11th of July, Mother Bigeu wrote:

Last Friday, feast of the Sacred Heart, we hoped for something final, and so it turned out; for the Holy Father, having seen the result of the labours of the Commission, signified his approval of every thing. But two changes are to be made in the Constitutions before the order for the Brief is given. These are the points: (1) In giving up an ecclesiastical Superior General, as asked and as you consented to do, something was left wanting. Some of his rights have been added to yours, which are thereby increased, and for some points, which have been foreseen, the Sovereign Pontiff names for us a Cardinal Protector who, whilst upholding us against attacks and encroachments, will help us to preserve our spirit, and the desirable uniformity. (2) As vows taken for a limited time are not the vows of religion, those made by the aspirants will be perpetual in accordance with the Constitutions, that is, your rights remain the same. At Profession, the vow of perseverance or *Stability* will be added, and from this, the Holy See only can dispense. This last point is a benefit granted by the Pope to supply for solemn vows, which cannot be made without strict enclosure. I will tell you in detail, *viva voce*, what the Sacred Heart has done for us, and what is in preparation. . . . What a pleasure it will be to read of your own joy on learning that God has set His seal on your work, and has deigned to accept your labours and sacrifices.

This letter arrived in Paris on July 22nd, and Mother Barat answered it the following day:

July 23rd, 1826.

Your last letter, received yesterday, overwhelmed us with joy; nothing more precious could have been given me for my feast. It was very good of our Lord to soften the painful thoughts this day always brings with it, by such delightful news. Our friends shared our joy, and all are pleased with this result. I am longing to see you and talk it all over . . . I shall wait till your good news is confirmed to convoke the General Congregation.

The confirmation came in due time, and on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, Mother Bigeu wrote:

My greeting to you is the first word Mgr d'Argenteau said just now when he came in to see us: *Gaudeamus*. Our affairs are settled, the Sacred Heart has overcome all obstacles, we bear the stamp of Rome, the life-giving seal that we so longed for. . . . On Tuesday, August 1st, we shall set out for Turin, where I shall await your orders.

O Reverend Mother, what joy to meet! What a *bouquet de fête* Monseigneur sent you. I rejoice with you and in you, with our Mothers and Sisters; this is my share in your feast, at which I should have so much wished to be present.

Before leaving Rome, Mother Bigeu asked for an audience, in which she could express to the Holy Father the gratitude of the Society. A letter from Father Rozaven to Mother Barat describes what took place:

On the morning of July 31st, the feast of St. Ignatius, the Mother Assistant was informed that the Holy Father would come that afternoon to the Gesù, and would admit her to kiss his feet in the sacristy. His Holiness arrived about half-past six, and after praying before the Blessed Sacrament and before the altar of St. Ignatius, he went to the place prepared for the audience. Our Father General * presented the two religious, who immediately knelt at his feet. Mother Bigeu did her best to express her gratitude, but she was much overcome by emotion. The Holy Father spoke to her with the utmost kindness, telling her, amongst other things, that he had experienced great consolation in concluding the affair, and hoped from it the best results for God's glory. Then he gave his blessing, not only to those who were present, but to all your Society, expressing the wish to see it spread and increase.

* The Very Reverend Father Fortis, General of the Society of Jesus, from 1820 to 1829.

After these words from the Holy Father, the forwarding of the Brief itself was only a matter of time, and Mother Bigeu's mission in Rome was at an end. She arrived at Turin on August the 6th, and on the 16th, Mother Barat summoned her to Paris for the Fourth General Congregation, opened on the feast of St. Michael.

The changes made in the Constitutions by the decree of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, were first notified by Mother Barat. They were those of which Mother Bigeu had informed her in her letter from Rome. The Cardinal Protector nominated by the Holy Father was Cardinal Pedecini, already a devoted friend of the Society. After speaking of the substitution of the Vow of Stability for Papal enclosure, Mother Barat added: "Our approbation is of the same description as that of the Society of Jesus. It is without a parallel for nuns without strict enclosure."

The General Congregation then took into deliberation various measures for making the observance of poverty and enclosure more strict. The habit was modified to its present form, and a poor school was undertaken, attached to the Paris house. As the 21st of November drew near, Father Varin gave a retreat, but at its close the long expected Brief had not yet made its appearance.

Meantime a foundation had been asked for at Lille; and Mother Barat went there herself early in 1827. She was the guest of Caroline de Beaufort, one of her pupils in very early days at the Oratoire, now Madame de la Grandville, whose generosity, and that of her husband, removed all difficulties. Mother Barat received from her every mark of grateful affection. Mother Bigeu was left at Lille to carry on the work.

Another foundation was made about the same time at Lyons, by the liberality of Madame de la Barmondière, who wished to endow a school for the free education of girls of noble birth in reduced circumstances. Mother Barat accepted the offer, and placed Mother Geoffroy at the head of the new house, which was situated in the Rue Boissac.

The Holy Father's Brief of Approbation, signed on the

22nd of December, 1826, only arrived in February, 1827. It was received with intense gratitude by the Mothers, who had dispersed during the interval, but once more reassembled to hear it read by the Superior General. Prayers were ordered in all the houses in thanksgiving. Before their final separation, another subject was discussed, namely, whether the official authorization of the State was to be sought for the Society. If this were granted, it would subject it to State protection and to the restrictions which the law of 1825 imposed upon religious bodies with regard to the possession and alienation of property, and other matters. Mother Barat wrote: "Father Varin says 'yes,' Monsieur Perreau says 'no.' Mgr Frayssinous, who framed the law, has never been able to take upon him to advise me one way or the other. His answer always is: 'Pray, and make up your mind. I say nothing.'"

Mother Barat applied to Rome, and Father Rozaven assured her that the Holy Father saw no reason against the step. Mother Barat left the decision to the General Congregation, but her private opinion was in favour of the application. The councillors came to the same conclusion, and a royal decree, issued by Charles X. on the 22nd of April, 1827, recognized and sanctioned the legal existence of the Society.

On the 6th and 7th of April, the usual elections took place. Mothers de Charbonnel, Desmarquest and Bigeu were elected Assistants General, and the Fourth Congregation declared its sessions at an end. On the 16th, Easter Monday, Mother Barat, the Assistants and Councillors made the vow of Stability. Father Varin took the opportunity of expressing his joy at seeing the Society now closely united to the supreme Head of the Church, and consequently to the Sacred Heart. By degrees, all those already professed made the vow of Stability, which from henceforth was to be made on the day of Profession.

Sorrow, however, followed hard on the joy this year had brought. We have seen how, throughout her long labours in Rome, Mother Bigeu's health had been a subject of uneasiness for Mother Barat, and since her return only her great energy

kept her from breaking down. When the General Congregation was closed, she went to Le Mans, Metz, and Beauvais to promulgate its decisions and put them in force, but when in August she again left Paris to fulfil the same mission at Poitiers, Niort, and Bordeaux, she could not overcome a secret presentiment that this journey would be her last. At Poitiers she saw once more her mother and other members of her family, as well as the convent so dear to her as the scene of her early religious life. On her return to Paris in October, she arrived so weak and exhausted that she could hardly walk. Her illness was a great grief to Mother Barat, who wrote to Mother Duchesne: "I can think of nothing but Mother Bigeu's state. You would be deeply touched at her patience under the weakness that is wearing her out. It is very very sad to see. Certainly the life of a religious of the Sacred Heart, and especially of a Superior, is a long martyrdom, above all when old age is drawing on, and our life has lasted long enough to see the deaths of those whom we have loved and with whom we have lived."

Mother Barat never left Mother Bigeu after this. "She is dying full of energy, and in spite of nature which seems to refuse to die," she wrote. "You may imagine how painful this is for herself and those around her, and especially for me. She suffers terribly but nothing exhausts her patience." On the 15th of November, she received Holy Viaticum and renewed her vows, but Mother Barat was obliged to finish the words of the formula which the dying lips were too weak to utter. She seemed to be passing away, but the flame of life still flickered: "I shall die twice over," she said; then turning to Father Varin who could not restrain his grief, she said: "Offer the Holy Sacrifice for me to-morrow if I am alive, and also if I am dead;" adding shortly afterwards: "Father, give me a great, great blessing." She was going to ask forgiveness of Mother Barat for her faults, but she could not, for Mother Barat's sobs interrupted her. Mother Desmarquest brought in her novices, and asked her to pray that they might be faithful to their vocation. "Oh, they will be faithful," she said earnestly, and

then added: "If only they knew how happy I am at this moment to have left all for God!"

One of her last thoughts was for her mother, to whom after her death Mother Barat, according to her wish, sent a relic of the true Cross which she had kissed repeatedly till the end. "On November 19th," said Mother Barat, "she gave up her soul to her Creator in the peace and fidelity she had maintained to her last breath."

Mgr de Beauregard, Bishop of Orleans, who in old days had known Mother Bigeu very well at Poitiers, wrote of her after expressing his sorrow at her death: "I have known few, if any, so simple as she was; she fed her soul with a few thoughts, and those few were full of peace." We know from what Mother Barat said of her when she was her novice at Poitiers, that in her eyes, from the first, she was as nearly perfect as a fallen child of Adam could be. The twenty years of devotedness and abnegation that had passed since then, had only strengthened her virtue, and made her more precious to the Society and to the Superior General.

For ten days after Mother Bigeu's death, Mother Barat shut herself up alone with God. "I sought to be alone," she said to the community afterwards. "I needed to pour out my soul before Him who had sent me this sorrow, and to ask Him for strength to bear it. I have lost a friend who understood me, a counsellor who seconded me, but I think much more of the irreparable loss to the Society than of my own sorrow." She wrote the same thing to Mother Grosier: "To me it is the loss of a friend, to all of us the loss of a generous, devoted soul, admirably fitted for doing God's work. But I need not talk of my grief, dear Mother, *God wills it, that is enough.*"

CHAPTER XXII

THE SCHOOL AT THE HOTEL BIRON. 1820–1827.

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thy hand cease, for thou knowest not which may rather spring up, this or that.

ECCLES. XI. 6.

WE have seen what Mother Barat's external work was during the years that intervened between the Third and Fourth General Congregations, but before we pass on to follow the further fortunes of the Society that was so intimately bound up with her, we must look at her labours amongst those with whom her daily life at the Hotel Biron was spent.

The reputation which the school in Paris soon gained was partly due to Mgr Frayssinous, who, as Superior of the house, took a great interest in its welfare. If, as a theologian, his opinions were not free from Gallican principles, his piety at least was deep and sincere, and Mother Barat's sanctity attracted him forcibly. His great veneration for her led him to make her the confidant of his thoughts; he sought her advice, and relied on her judgment. In August, 1822, he wrote to her: "You are one of the few on whom my mind rests in its troubles and anguish. I know that you are concerned about the salvation of my soul, and this persuasion is a relief to me. You are more bound than others to pray for me, because you know more of my weaknesses, though your indulgent friendship hides much of them from you." Two years later, he was made Minister of Public Instruction, and ceased therefore to be Superior of the Paris house. He wrote of this to Mother Barat: "It is a great trial for me, and perhaps for you also. You foresee the consequences: certain exterior relations will be

broken off, but I hope that the others will remain unchanged. You will always remember that I have been your Father, and I shall never forget it."

Another cause to which the success of the school must be ascribed at that time was the favour with which it was regarded by the royal family. The altar in the new chapel at the Hotel Biron, built in 1823, was a present from the King, and there were many other royal gifts. As soon as the chapel was blessed, the Duchesse de Berri and the Duchesse d'Angoulême brought there the Duc de Bordeaux and his sister, then about three or four years old. Such visits were often repeated, but Mother Barat ascribed all such royal favours to the fact that Mother de Gramont was at the head of the school. "The Duchesse de Berri," she wrote to Mother Thérèse, "has written most graciously, dwelling very much on the good manners of our children. This is meant, as you will easily see, as a compliment to Mother de Gramont."

The aged Duchesse de Bourbon, mother of the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien, shot at Vincennes by order of Napoleon, was living at this time in the Rue de Varenne. She had established in her house a hospital, the *Hospice Enghien*, where the sick poor were nursed at her expense, in memory of her son and for the repose of his soul. She loved Mother Barat, and often went to see her, and Mother Barat, on her side, had a true affection for the lonely princess, whose peculiarities, physical and mental, caused her to be shunned by the world. Mother Barat habitually saw too much below the surface, she looked too directly at the soul that was hidden beneath the exterior, whether pleasing or the reverse, not to love it, and to love, for its sake, its outward covering. She brought light and comfort to the mind and heart of the old duchess, and at her death, in January, 1822, wept for her as for a true friend.

Another visitor, who came sometimes to give Mother Barat the benefit of her views on education, was Madame de Genlis. Her well-meant advice must have rung strangely in Mother Barat's ears, but she listened courteously, that she might have an opportunity of saying something of religion that would be

helpful to the old lady, then very near the end of her long and chequered career. "Who do you think has been to see me?" she inquired of her daughters after one of these visits. "Madame de Genlis," and she added no comment to the name.

The high position of the children who formed most of the school at that time was not of Mother Barat's seeking, but neither was the increased responsibility it involved a reason in her eyes for loving them the less. She worked indefatigably for them with Mother de Gramont, who had more to do than one person could possibly accomplish. "As there is no one else to help her," Mother Barat wrote, "I must do all I can. God will come to my aid." As she always looked to God for help, she taught others to do so also, and this was the first principle she instilled into those whom she was forming to be mistresses in the school. "Give of your superabundance to the children," she would say, "fill your hearts with love for God, and then you will always be able to instil it into them. If we were united to God by recollection and death to self, we should be able to do wonders for them. God will refuse us none of the fruit of our sacrifices if we refuse Him nothing of what He asks of us." "You will do good," she wrote to another, "if you are faithful, and live in union with our Lord by self-sacrifice, for then you will act by His spirit and with Him. The reward of your fidelity will be the growth of piety in the hearts of your children. I cannot exaggerate the effect produced upon the children's souls by the spirit of prayer, union with God, recollection, and interior mortification, practised by their mistresses."

After the love of God, she inculcated love of the children, but her own example must have spoken more eloquently than any words. Who could say how she loved them herself, both naturally and supernaturally, and what marvellous intuition this great love gave her into their hearts and minds! Some recollections treasured up by the children themselves may help us to understand what her love for them led her to *do*, and still more to *be*. "If we had a sorrow, small or great," says

one who was under her care for many years, "we made all haste to confide it to her, certain of her help and protection. If one of our school-fellows was in disgrace, the first question we asked was whether it was with Mother de Gramont, who, though justice itself, was a little inclined to severity. If, on the other hand, the affair was in Mother Barat's hands, we breathed freely: 'It will all come right,' we said, 'you will escape this time!' We loved her so much that we thought she belonged to us rather than to the community. What a sorrow it was to see her go away, but the joy of her return! I shall never forget the day and hour when, after an absence of several months, she came back to the Hotel Biron. It was twelve o'clock; the *porte-cochère* was flung open, a carriage drove into the courtyard and passed in front of the children's refectory. Every one rushed to the window, and such a joyous shout rang out that the driver asked whom he could be bringing in, 'was it some princess?' It was more for us; it was our Mother General!"

"I was a child at school in Paris, between 1818 and 1825," wrote another, who at the time of Mother Barat's death was the mother of a family, "and she was often with the children at that time. Forty years have not effaced the recollection of my happiness, when, as often happened, she allowed me to talk to her alone. Our love and respect for her were very deep, and the name of Mother, which we gave her, best expressed our feeling. We looked upon her as scarcely belonging to this earth, as something almost supernatural. Her eyes seemed to read into the very depths of our souls. My mother, having had considerable money losses, wished me to come home. Madame de Gramont thought that this was because the expense of my education was too heavy, and her loving heart prompted her to write the kindest of letters, telling my mother, in Madame Barat's name, that the religious claimed me as their own child. Although my mother had lost much, she could not accept this offer, but she was so much touched by it that she could not make up her mind to remove me from the care of those who filled so well her place in my

regard. Blessings on all three, and especially blessed be God for having kept me in the Sacred Heart."

Delicate children, or those to whom school discipline was a special difficulty, met with the greatest kindness from Mother Barat. An American lady writes: "I was often in the infirmary when I first came to school in Paris, for, in spite of all the kindness I met with, I was really homesick, and could not accustom myself to the European climate and the ways of school-life. Mother Barat paid me a visit every day, and to amuse me used to dress my large doll, and she even knitted a pair of stockings for it. My eldest girl used to play with this pair of stockings and they were lost, but I would give a great deal to get them back again now!"

"We were far from being perfect," writes one of the children of that time. "We were classed under one of three heads: very good, good, indifferent. On certain days Mother Barat used to come to the school and have these lists read out in her presence. Then she would address herself personally to the naughty ones (who were troublesome rather than any thing worse) and correct them very kindly, yet in a way they would not forget."

The chief evil to combat in the Paris school was pride of birth. It was carried so far as that the children on one occasion remarked of a new mistress that she was not of noble parentage. As soon as Mother Barat heard this she assembled the school, and after a few words about the respect due to those who represent God's authority, she said: "Such is His law, but you, children, see things differently since you wish all your mistresses to be highly born. As this is the case you will see me no more, for my family has no claim whatever to nobility, and I have only to wish you good-bye." This announcement made a great impression on those to whom it was addressed. The delinquents implored her with tears to stay with them and forgive them. It was no doubt to this she referred when she wrote to Mother Thérèse: "Our children are a great anxiety; they are full of themselves. I gave them a good humiliation one day by telling them that it was a great hardship for us to

have only children of high rank here, and that henceforth all my preference would be for the middle class. Some of them made a great outcry at this threat. Oh, humility is a very beautiful virtue, but there is little enough of it in this world!"

She was inexorable only in the case of children likely to do harm morally to others. "Such a child," she wrote to Mother de Gramont, "is a weight upon my mind. Separate her from the rest before you send her away, and do not hesitate if there are others who ought also to go. This is my great anxiety. The mangy sheep must be cut off from the fold to save the flock." When the spirit of the world had gained entrance to the school or was striving hard to do so, Mother Barat's great weapon was to let the children make a retreat. She also asked for special prayers and penances for them from their mistresses. One day when the spirit of growing insubordination led her to administer a well-earned reproof to the whole school, with a warmth and vehemence, characteristic of her when she was moved, she said: "And whilst you forget yourselves, resist authority, and neglect your duty, do you know what your mistresses are about? They practise such severe penances that a person in whom I have confidence brought me the other day a discipline stained with blood, and said, 'This is what your nuns are doing. They are killing themselves.' Yes, children, they are killing themselves, and for your sakes, to expiate your disobedience and your stubbornness."

When those who had been unruly were sorry and wished to do better, Mother Barat would take them under her special protection. To be "one of Mother Barat's children" was a distinction that did not speak of irreproachable conduct in the past, but of a promise of amendment for the future. Mother Barat had great compassion for hot-headedness and the hasty, passionate natures that, once brought under the yoke of discipline, may be trained to great things. There was, amongst others of this kind at the Hotel Biron, one child whom the touch of Mother Barat's gentle hand transformed from a lion to a lamb. She was a Rochejaquelein, and inherited from her father the qualities which made him the hero of La Vendée.

They made her the torment of her companions, and the despair of her mistresses, until Mother Barat came to the rescue. Thérèse chafed against the restraint of the school rule so vehemently that Mother Barat resolved to free her from it for a time, kept her with her as much as possible, and let her spend long hours in the garden. When Mother Barat was at Bordeaux, in 1825, with the community of which Madame de Lalanne had been Superior, a lamb had taken a great fancy to her, followed her everywhere, and bleated piteously when she was in church or anywhere out of reach. It had been sent to Paris after her return, and was now a great source of amusement for Thérèse. One of the lay-sisters had charge of her two lambs, as Mother Barat called *Robine* and Thérèse, and the example of *Robine's* docility and gentleness combined with the open air, the freedom, and above all, Mother Barat's teachings, got the better of the untamed instincts of the child, who turned out exceedingly well. There was the same difficulty at the beginning with her sister Annette, and Mother de Gramont was in despair about her, but Mother Barat won her also by her gentleness and kindness.

These examples were the practical outcome of her teaching. "No doubt," she said once to the mistresses, "children are often sent to us in very bad dispositions, but God entrusts them to you that you may bring them back to Him. If a religious of the Sacred Heart cannot fulfil this mission, difficult though it be, what good is our vocation? The graces we receive are proportionate to the needs of the souls entrusted to us." No dislikes, no preferences must be shown. "Their pride would be hurt, and they would not love you. Have a good opinion of your children, and do not be severe. You must make them love you. It goes very much against a mistress to be always scolding and fault-finding." But if severity is to be guarded against, so also is softness and over-indulgence. "Kindness is to be shown always, but the mistresses must not let the children be too familiar with them, nor must they try to attract them. The truer is their love, the less they will flatter them, and constant care must take the place of caresses."

When speaking to the mistresses at the Hotel Biron in 1821, Mother Barat, said to them: "Deny yourselves any special fondness for the children, even those under your care, looking to nothing but the love of God, and the desire to draw these young hearts to Him. You must be invulnerable to the charms of childhood, and must be on your guard against the advances the children may make to win your affection. Your affection is no longer your own to dispose of. These children's hearts were not made for you! Were you, alas, to be taken in the meshes of these nets, you would be incapable of doing good because passion would be your only guide. Whereas if you look to God and God alone, He will be with you; He will impart to you the light and grace necessary for your work. He will fructify the seed you sow, He will bring to maturity the fruit which you perhaps will never see, but which will none the less ripen under the warmth of the rays that issue from His Sacred Heart. And when in after-life, surrounded it may be by the pleasures of the world, the thoughts of your pupils turn back to their mistresses of former days, they will remember the happiness they used to read upon your countenances in the midst of your life of sacrifice, and they will conclude that happiness is found in loving God and loving none but Him. Be Christians, be apostles, be manly in heart, and give up all womanish weakness."

The children's studies were of great importance in her eyes, and she laid special stress on the value of cultivating a taste for the best literature, which, to quote her own words "raises the soul into a purer and higher atmosphere, loosens its hold on material things, makes it aspire after God." But it is needless to say that she always considered the knowledge of religion as of pre-eminent importance. "In this century of religious indifference nothing is so necessary," she wrote, "as to impress their minds, and form their convictions by the knowledge of religious truth, insisting on the shortness of life, the eternity of weal or woe, the vanity of earthly things when they do not help towards our salvation." She wished the elder girls to learn the elements of sound philosophy, that they

might be able to give a reason to themselves, and to others, of the faith that is in them.

She loved to see the children working at vestments, or for the poor, and continually urged them to be diligent in needlework. Another thing she inculcated was thoughtfulness and generosity toward inferiors, and when she saw proofs of this spirit in them she would exclaim joyfully: "Ah! you are my children!" "And when she said this," one of them tells us, "we would have gone to the ends of the earth for her."

The youngest children were especially dear to Mother Barat, who used to say that one of the best mistresses should be set apart for them; and she carried out this principle into practice. She used to tell how, before the Revolution, one of the best schools in France was that of the Ursulines at Clermont-sur-Oise, directed by Abbé de Lamarche, and that there the Superior herself had charge of the little ones. "That is what I would do if I were free," she added, "it was the right course." "Of all the employments in the house," she said at another time, "the only one I ever coveted was that of the mistress of the little ones. The work with them is all underground. The roots are being developed. Only God and their guardian angels know what is going on in these dear little souls; those who train them are building up the City of God on a foundation that nothing can destroy. I think that a child who has made a good preparation for her First Communion, and makes it well, will never be lost. If you see her slacken afterwards, do not be out of heart. You do not know how her conscience is reproaching her. We do not always sow the seed of perfection, but we sow the seed of remorse. There God sets the limit that stops souls on their downward course. As one grows old, one expects less, and to prevent souls from doing what will separate them eternally from the Sacred Heart becomes a fixed idea in the mind."

The great remedy which Mother Barat opposed to the tide of evil was true piety. The spiritual exercises which she taught the children to practise were meditation, examination of conscience, the reading of Scripture and of the Lives of the

Saints, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. She ever inculcated the maxim that we should approach the altar *to offer sacrifice*. "Do not go before our Lord *empty-handed*," she often said. A lady who had made her First Communion in 1820 said that forty-five years had not obliterated the impression made upon her by the way Mother Barat read and commented on the twenty-second Psalm as a preparation for First Communion. The imitation and love of the Sacred Heart was the great instrument by which she sought to remake and renew souls, and next to this came the love of our Lady. The most fervent amongst the elder children were enrolled in our Lady's Congregation, an association begun about the same time as the school in Paris, and governed by rules laid down by Father Varin. Not at school only, but in the world and in their families, the Children of Mary were by good example to lead others to the practice of all Christian virtues.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE NOVICESHIP IN PARIS. 1820–1827.

I fled Him down the nights and down the days,
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind, and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

F. THOMSON.

THE novices at the Hotel Biron usually numbered about twenty, and they came from all parts of Europe. Mother Bigeu was Mistress of Novices at first, but absence or ill-health often made her unable to do the work herself, and the task then fell on Mother Barat, who had at that time to second her only a young religious not yet professed. She wrote to Mother Maillucheau: "We have a great deal to do, each of us in her own department, Mother Eugénie in her *hôtel*, and her Mother in her stables." There could not well be a greater contrast than that between the princely building inhabited by the school, and the lowly abode of the community and novices.

"I hope," wrote Mother Barat in February, 1821, "that our Lord will fill our convents with many of those who refuse Him nothing; but they are so rare in this century that we must pray a great deal to get them. A Russian postulant here (Madame Nathalie Rostopchin) has given up every thing, as her family has quite cast her off on account of her change of religion. She is very well educated and very good." Just before this, Mother Barat had written to Mother Duchesne: "We have an English-speaking novice who is longing to join you at her own expense. She is Irish and about thirty years old. The Irish are very pleasing; their character is like ours." Anna Murphy, of whom this was written, was from

Cork, and had been brought up by the Ursulines at Blackrock. Her naïve letters to them give a lively picture of the novice-ship at that time. "What seems to me miraculous," she wrote, "is that, no matter where they come from, the novices are all alike, and seem all to have the same customs and the same ideas. In short, they have but one heart and one soul. I attribute this unanimity to their love for their Superior General, who is one of the humblest and least awe-inspiring of all the community. She is only about forty years old, lively, bright, and clever. The youngest amongst us speaks to her as easily as to one of the other novices. She is always with us,—in the refectory and everywhere else." "The mortification that the Rule requires," she wrote later, "is the gift and complete surrender of our will into the Hands of God. . . . I think that French women take easily to practices of mortification: far from dreading humiliations, they seem to be on the look-out for them. They have a certain strength of character and confidence which lead them to undertake any thing. Shyness and self-diffidence are not natives of the soil. You can imagine the part your poor Irish girl plays amongst them. I am the last and least in the house, and of no use except to God, who likes to manifest His power by employing weak instruments."

There was another novice of Irish extraction who in after-life came to work for the Sacred Heart in England. Thérèse de Wall belonged to a family whose fidelity to the Stuart cause made them share the exile of James II. We shall find her later on, entrusted with the purchase of the property at Rochampton, and the charge of bringing there the community already established in England. A fellow-novice of hers, Aimée d'Avenas was destined to be one of the pioneers of the first colony of Mother Barat's daughters who settled in this country. She came from the neighbourhood of Lyons, ready for any work, and detached from every thing except her books. She had shared her brother's education, and was an excellent classical scholar and well-read in French literature. Already she had written a history of the Greek Empire, which was

afterwards published. But her love for learning was an obstacle to her in the life of a novice; sweeping and other manual work instead of her studies was more than she could bear. She left the noviceship, but soon re-entered, and this time ready for any sacrifice. "We want learning," Mother Barat said to her, "but we want sanctity still more," and Aimée d'Avenas determined henceforth to combine the two. "She is a courageous soul," Mother Barat said of her, "I wish I knew where I could get a dozen such. I am not afraid of defects provided energy and good-will go along with them; but these are scarce now-a-days."

Amongst the French novices were two with whom we shall soon make closer acquaintance. One was Armande de Causans, who entered in 1822, at the age of thirty-six. Her family had been closely connected by friendship with Madame Elizabeth, sister of Louis XVI., and had suffered all the hardships of exile and poverty during the Revolution. She was remarkable for the brilliancy of her wit and the soundness of her judgment, and when Mother Barat saw in her, besides all the distinction that contact with the world can give, the lowly virtues that make a model novice, she founded on her great hopes for the future. She made her her secretary for some years, and on Mother Bigeu's death, sent her to Turin as Superior. The other novice referred to was Adèle Cahier, daughter of the King's jeweller. She had been sent to school at Beauvais, when Reverend Mother Desmarquest was Superior of the house, and soon after her entrance she found her again at the Hotel Biron as Mistress of Novices. Shortly after making her vows, she was sent to Turin, and thence to the foundation at Rome.

Another who combined many rare qualities was Elizabeth Galitzin, a Russian, converted from schism and brought to the true Church and to the Sacred Heart, under God, by Father Rozaven. Her father, Prince Galitzin, died young, and her mother, though very fond of her, brought her up with great severity, and went so far as to allow the masters who taught her, to strike her repeatedly and even cruelly. This education,

à la Tartare, as she used to call it, made her, as a child, defiant, obstinate and passionate. Her mother had secretly become a Catholic, but Elizabeth learnt this for the first time on her sixteenth birthday, and a wild fury against the Catholic Church, and especially against the Jesuits at St. Petersburg, on whom she laid the whole blame of the misfortune, took possession of her soul. She swore eternal hatred to them, wrote down the oath, and for four years renewed it every evening when she said her night prayers. Yet in spite of this fierce indignation, Elizabeth was a good-hearted girl; her conscience was tender, she was frank and open, and had great strength of character. She was naturally very fond of the theatre, but she gave up plays altogether on conscientious grounds. She took Italian lessons at this time from an aged priest, and on his death assisted at his Requiem Mass. She had scarcely entered the church when a voice within her seemed to say: "You hate the Catholic religion, but for all that you will be a Catholic." She began to weep bitterly without being able either to account for or check her tears. From that time a struggle went on in her soul between the prejudices of her education and the influence of God's grace. During a stay which she made in a country-house near St. Petersburg, she practised severe penances; she fasted, she prayed, she rose at midnight and slept on the bare floor in all the cold of the Russian climate. Another of her relations became a Catholic at this time, but this was at first only an aggravation to her perplexities of mind. She began by protesting, then she cried; but that night, for the first time, the words of her oath died away on her lips. She spent the ensuing hours, not in sleep but in deep reflection on the Catholic Church, and its truth appeared so luminously before her mind that all she read afterwards could not strengthen her conviction. The next day she threw her arms round her mother's neck and asked to be allowed to see Father Rozaven, to make her confession and be received into the Church, even should the step involve the loss of fortune, country and all her prospects in life. "We both cried enough to melt the stones," she used to say.

A week afterwards Elizabeth made her First Communion at the hands of Father Rozaven, who two months later, in December, 1815, was, with his brothers in religion, banished from St. Petersburg. From the time of her reception into the Church the wish to consecrate herself entirely to God grew stronger and deeper in Elizabeth's soul. She did so consecrate herself as far as circumstances allowed, for she spent her time and her means upon the poor, and when she was obliged to appear at Court festivities, she wore a hair-cloth under her dress. She wrote to Father Rozaven, in Rome, begging him to choose an Order for her to enter. "I thought that what would be most pleasing to our Lord," she wrote, "would be that I should enter some convent by obedience. All I asked was that the Institute should be austere, and devoted to teaching." She also told Father Rozaven that she should be very happy if he could find her one like his own: however, only after trying her vocation for eight years did he tell her of the Society of the Sacred Heart and put her in correspondence with Mother Barat, who, from that time, taught her by letter how to make progress in religious virtues "that when she came to the noviceship she might be of all the novices the most humble, obedient, and united to God." There was no need for the spur; Mother Barat had only to keep within bounds her ardour for good works, charity, and mortification. "Do not mind," she wrote to her in July, 1826, "having now to take care of yourself. Later on you will be called on to sacrifice every thing to the salvation of souls. Add no corporal mortification to the fatigue of the journey. You must arrive in good condition like the victims of old who were well taken care of that they might be more worthy of being offered."

Elizabeth's mother had required that her entrance should be deferred until she had attained the age of thirty, and, in 1826, the time had come. She was to have no fortune, but Mother Barat never made this a hindrance to reception. "I should be delighted, on the contrary," she wrote "to receive you only with what you have on, as St. Francis Borgia long ago received the little Stanislaus Kostka. Money never

determines our choice or admission of subjects. The only dowry we require is a good vocation, a sound judgment, and some talents. . . . If you bring a mind from which you have driven all recollections of the world, a heart detached from every thing, you will be rich, my dear child, and very welcome amongst us." Elizabeth entered, as Mother Barat used to say, laughing, "like St. John the Baptist." Her mother very reluctantly brought her to Metz, where she was clothed in December, 1826. A few days before the ceremony Mother Barat wrote to her: "Shall you really die of joy, my child? I have sent leave for them to give you our holy habit. I ought however to say as a make-weight that this habit lays you under great and terrible obligations. How shall you acquit yourself of them? You must no longer think or act but by obedience, you must continually sacrifice your most innocent inclinations, you must cling to nothing and no one in this world. It would take a volume to explain all. Shall you have courage to enlist under these colours? If you have, you may prepare to make your offering, and believe, dear Elizabeth, that if the Sacred Heart of our Lord deigns to ask you for some sacrifice rather hard to your weak virtue, He will Himself help you to accomplish it."

Early in 1827, Mother Barat sent for her to Paris, and wrote: "Your cell in the noviceship is being prepared. It is so small that it is almost like that of St. Peter of Alcantara, and you will infer from this that the furniture is only what the Prophet Eliseus had in the house of the Sunamitess. This is true, but you are coming to do penance, and we must not disappoint your expectation, or rather the expectation of our Blessed Lord who wants you to give Him all." In the noviceship Elizabeth Galitzin was everywhere and always the most obedient. She said to one of her companions: "All is well with me, for I trust that when I get to the gate of Heaven I shall be able to say: 'Open to me, I have been obedient.'" At recreation she was one of the liveliest amongst the novices, and she never spared herself in work or mortification.

Another novice was Mathilde d'Erlach, from Berne, of

a race illustrious in the chronicles of the struggles of the Swiss cantons. She had early lost her father, and had been terribly spoilt by her mother and all her family, who had no better way of showing their affection for the witty, lively girl than by satisfying to the full her taste for gaiety. Her love for the poor, which clung to her in spite of constant heedlessness, was the saving trait in her character. She had been a staunch Protestant, but more from national and family prejudice than from personal conviction, and during a stay of some months in Paris she made the acquaintance of Fathers de Place and Ronsin. Unlike Elizabeth Galitzin, her belief in their being in the wrong led her to pray for their conversion. But God's grace spoke strongly in her soul, and one day she knelt down, and told our Lord that she left herself entirely in His Hands, and was ready for any thing as soon as she had light to show her what she should do. Her answer was the grace of conversion to the faith, and a call to religious life. She was received into the Church in the chapel of the convent, and as soon as her vocation had been sufficiently tested, was allowed to enter the noviceship. "I thought myself in Heaven," she said to Mother Barat, "and I felt quite certain that I should never leave the Sacred Heart."

We have seen how, long ago, in the noviceship at Poitiers, Mother Barat set every one at ease, and she did the same in Paris. No one was to be wearisome to others, and she sometimes quoted the saying of St. Teresa who, finding that in one of her convents the nuns had made it a rule never to say any thing that could be thought clever, exclaimed: "What would become of us if such a principle were to prevail in our little monasteries! The charm of the love of Christ would vanish. It is quite enough to be silly by nature without trying to become more silly by grace!"

Often during the summer she took the novices for recreation to the garden, where they gathered round her under the trees or on a green bank. Her conversation was the reflection of her soul,—simple, lively, charming; full of appreciation of all that is worth appreciating in the things of time, but tending

ever towards God and the things of eternity. Her instructions were given in a room looking out on the Boulevard des Invalides. Her straw-bottomed chair was placed at the foot of a little altar that occupied the space between the two windows, and in front of her were ranged first the novices, then the community, with the lay-sisters behind. She began by saying the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* in a tone so full of recollection and true piety that a supernatural atmosphere seemed to be created around her. The opening sentences of the instructions were pronounced slowly, but very soon—as soon as our Lord's name had passed her lips—the words came fast, and her eloquence carried away the hearts of those who listened to her. In accordance with Monsieur Montaigne's advice, the Gospels and Epistles, especially those of St. Paul and St. John, formed the solid groundwork of her teaching.

In 1822, finding that her frequent absences, entailed by the founding of fresh houses of the Society, prevented the regularity so essential for the formation of novices, she established as Mistress of the Paris noviceship Mother Desmarquest, whose wonderful aptitude for the religious formation of souls led to her remaining at this post for thirty years. She was more than a guide for the novices: she was the very type on which they were to be formed, the mould that was to fashion for many years the religious of the Sacred Heart. The depth of her union with our Lord and of her love for Him was the secret of her unruffled evenness and calm. The noiselessness of her walk, the gestures by which she indicated what was to be done, made her the impersonation of silence, whilst her perfect regularity, the composure of her words, the order that everywhere marked her presence made her a living image of the Rule. Her love for the novices was very deep and motherly. When a thunderstorm came on at night she would glide gently through their dormitories to see if any were frightened, or if it was very cold she would visit them in the same way to see if they were warm enough. "My only business here is to make you happy," she would say to them, and her care was as efficacious for the ills of the soul as for those of the body.

Mother de Marbeuf, who was sacristan, was for a time her helper. She too was a living type of the perfection to which all were called. Her long experience of the world and of all it could give only made her set higher store on religious life. She wrote one day to a friend: "Do not let your daughters enter directly they leave school. If they do not know the world they will perhaps think that in leaving it they are giving up a great deal for God, while in reality neither its pleasures nor its honours are worth a regret." And in the same spirit she would say to the young novices: "Do not be so proud of your sacrifice. If you only knew what the slavery of the world is! It is hard labour at the hulks."

Father Varin often came to give instructions, usually turning on the simple thoughts: "God is yours, and you are His." His words sank indelibly into the hearts of his hearers so that when death came twenty years later, at Algiers, to one of these novices, she exclaimed: "How true it was what Father Varin told me, that I should die saying: 'How good God is!' I am beside myself with joy."

The confessor and director of the noviceship was the Abbé Trébuquet, at that time secretary to Mgr Frayssinous, and later on tutor to the Comte de Chambord, with whom he lived until his death, in 1869. He had a great gift for the direction of souls, for which his discernment of their needs and close union with God eminently fitted him. But it was evident from the growth in holiness that went on within the precincts of the noviceship, that the Holy Ghost Himself directed and guided all. Mother Barat was most deeply persuaded of the necessity of fidelity to the least inspirations of grace and avoidance of the slightest faults, and it was impossible to hear her speak on this subject without being convinced that the Holy Ghost directed the movements of her soul. On Whitsun Eve, 1827, she spoke so earnestly on the necessity of this surrender of the soul to the Spirit of God, that several times emotion impeded her utterance. "A soul thus given up," she said, "no longer walks, it springs forward, it flies. The Cross ceases to be

burdensome ; it is no longer the Cross, but the staff on which the pilgrim leans. The thorns are no longer thorns, but the crown which our Lord has given her as He gave it to St. Catherine of Sienna. She would fain press down the sharp points, that they might pierce her head more deeply, and that her love might thus rejoice in the enjoyment of her pain. . . . This love is of unconquerable strength, and precious beyond price or value. And if one soul possessing it is so happy, who could describe the happiness of a Society whose every member was thus surrendered to the guidance of the Holy Ghost ? It would indeed be a foretaste of Heaven."

When Mother Barat looked around her and pondered over the new generation growing up in the Paris noviceship, thoughts must often have come into her mind like those which she expressed to Mother Geoffrey when she wrote to her in 1824 : "I hope as you do, dear Mother, that what is to be will be better than what has been. We old ones are indeed worth little enough, but our Lord makes up for every thing. Thus all will be convinced that our Society is the work of His Sacred Heart, since it was wanting at its origin in every thing that has made other Institutes flourish."

Mgr Frayssinous, also looking forward, told Mother Barat that he should like to be alive in eighty years' time, to see whether the Society would still be running as swift a race in the path of perfection.

CHAPTER XXIV

LETTERS TO MOTHER ADRIENNE MICHEL. 1809–1827.

Fewer still
Girding their loins, without a glance behind,
Mount ever upward in that mystical light,
Above the earth's gross humours, till the air
Grows purer, and the paths which seemed so steep
Are smoothed before them, and they tread the snows,
Where other footsteps, few and rare, shall come—
In the efflux of the ages—storm and cloud
Left far behind; God shining overhead,
And round them all the changeless calm of Heaven.

SONGS OF TWO WORLDS.

WE have seen several times already in Mother Barat's life how she trained those amongst whom she lived. The following series of letters, written to Mother Adrienne Michel will give some idea of her patient solicitude in helping those at a distance. The earlier letters up to 1814 were addressed to Dooresele, where Mother Adrienne Michel lived until the separation of that house from the Society, and after 1814 they were addressed to her in various convents in France.

September 20th, 1809.

Your letter would have grieved me, dear Adrienne, if you had not ended it by a resolution that I believe comes from the bottom of your heart: *I am going to begin in earnest.* Why fear your head and your imagination? Your will is firm. The resistance you have to overcome only increases your merits and adds lustre to your virtues. You are wrong in thinking that no saint had your defects. The Church proposes some to our veneration who had very peculiar characters and hearts less warm than yours. You must be courageous

and persevering, for as you experience much difficulty in self-conquest and as you are by nature light and inconstant, you must, at any cost, continue your practices of piety and mortification.

Secondly, you must watch over yourself with great attention, and correct especially the faults that appear exteriorly, such as unevenness of temper, antipathies for such and such people.

Thirdly, I am bound to agree with you, my dear child, that such a life is hard to nature. We must mortify ourselves continually until we have gained such control over the exterior and interior senses that the soul becomes quite the mistress; then it is drawing near the state of entire purification that disposes it for union with God, which is Heaven on earth, a foretaste of the bliss of Paradise. All the saints have had the happiness of attaining to this, some more, others less. As spouses of Jesus Christ, we ought to tend to it, and we attain it by dying to every thing. Dear Adrienne, I am not speaking here of any thing out of the way. Many holy souls have attained to union with God, without having been enriched with extraordinary favours. I am speaking of the peace which the soul enjoys that has never refused our Lord anything, which has immolated itself daily as a continual holocaust. "Why," inquires the author of the *Following of Christ*, "are there so few contemplatives in our days? Our Lord is as liberal now as ever." And he answers that it is because few souls are willing to die to themselves continually; and that is true. Now more than ever, how few generous souls there are! How much cowardice in self-conquest; how much self-seeking, even in our devotions! In spite of the difficulty she would meet with, what perfection a faithful and loving soul would attain, who went to God in the simplicity of her heart, who recognized His will in the voice of those who guide her, in every trial that befalls her, and who would deny herself every minute of the day to obey Him and please Him.

Be you this soul, my dear child. Seek only God alone everywhere, and you will find Him. Sacrifice the taste for spiritual consolations. Our Lord shows His wisdom in refusing them to you. You would have grown too fond of them, and, as Mgr de la Motte, the late Bishop of Amiens, said very truly: "We must seek the God of consolations not the consolations of God." This is enough to convince you, dear Adrienne. I shall have the satisfaction when I see you of finding you well on the way towards this death to self which our Lord asks of you. Good-bye, and pray for me. I have as much need as you have of dying to every thing.

March 31st, 1810.

I am so sorry for your loss; your uncle did you good, but he is still useful to you in Heaven, and the remembrance of his virtues will be a stimulus that should never leave you. And yet, is it not your experience that God shows His wisdom in removing from us those in whom we have most confidence? Our heart is so strangely framed, that insensibly it clings to all these supports, and God is loved less purely. How happy you are, my child, that our Lord is jealous of your affection! He loves you with a strong love, and wishes that you, on your side, should love Him alone; that all your actions should be for Him, and all your thoughts directed to Him. He wishes that you should put Him "as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm;" and that you should be "a fountain sealed up" from all but Him.

Be proud of this preference, and, seeing your own nothingness and your weakness, increase your gratitude and your love for God who does not reject you on account of your faults, how great soever they may be.

July 17th, 1811.

How good our Lord is to give us a share in His Cross! Let us love this good Cross, and this only besides our Lord. I must tell you, my child, as the thought has come to me several times, I fear you have too natural an affection for your Mothers, and that you love our Lord less purely. I am jealous of your heart for our loving God. I wish you to love Him alone and creatures very little. Do you remember the words you were fond of: "My sister is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up"? Afterwards, the Spouse tells her to put a seal upon her heart and on her arm, because He wishes no one to be admitted but Himself into that tabernacle which He has chosen and adorned with the fairest flowers of virtue. Make your examen sometimes on entire detachment from creatures, and see—not only whether your God is the sole Master of the garden of your heart—but whether any one else enters there, if it were only to take a short walk.

I send you St. Gertrude. You will be the last to read it, as is just. Are you not the youngest and the least in virtue? You will like this reading; try to profit by it. I hope that it may convince you of the necessity of purifying earthly affections if we wish to attain—I do not say to singular favours, for God does not grant these to every one—but to union with Him who is the end for which we were made, and especially the end of our religious life.

3rd February, 1812.

What wretched creatures we are ! We have left all things to follow the Cross of Christ, and yet we are always stopping on our road And what stops us ? Some creature, a mere nothing. How little common-sense we have, dear Adrienne. Have we not often found that the only happy hearts are those that are detached from every thing ? You may try the pathways right and left, but you will have to come back to the middle, that is the direct road, along which only those can walk who are not burdened by any weight, for they would sink if they were heavily laden. Make up your mind to sacrifice every thing to God and see Him alone in all.

25th January, 1813.

In spite of my constant desire to help you, I can do little except by my prayers. Scarcely once in six months have I a moment to talk to you. My comfort is that you are not alone : you have your Superiors, your Rule, God, who will not forsake you so long as you are faithful to Him, and how can you be otherwise ? Our Lord is constantly going in search of you. He seems to expect more from you than from many others, to whom He does not grant His special protection. He is always asking you to give yourself to Him without the smallest reserve ; He takes from you all that you leant upon, and soon perhaps He will take all that was a consolation to you.

How happy you are, my child, that our Lord thus calls you to follow Him ; but He calls you also to follow His Cross, for He is never without it. That is your path. It is high and precious, for a soul that knows how to value it at its true worth. Follow then this Divine standard, my child, but follow it straight, without any deviation to right or to left. You will thus walk without turning aside, if you keep your resolutions of being docile and submissive in all things to God's commands, accepting all the sacrifices He imposes.

How I shall rejoice, if, your whole life through, you persevere in this entire determination to be till death the crucified spouse of a suffering God. I beseech of you, dear Adrienne, do not look back. It is time to put the axe to the tree, and cut, not the fruit and the leaves which reappear over and over again, but the root of this noxious growth, and replace it by the tree of grace that will produce fruits of life.

March 23rd, 1813.

" In My Father's house there are many mansions," and God prepares for each soul its destined place. But we must try to travel thither perseveringly and quickly, and that we may sooner and more

surely reach our destination, we must strip off all that may stop or retard our progress. This involves the practice of a constant mortification, and in all things, as far as is possible. The Holy Ghost generally asks this minute fidelity of one who is wholly given up to His guidance; happy state in which we may say: My life "is hid with Christ in God." Such a one does nothing out of the way, but as the exterior and interior senses are mortified, and the powers of the soul under control, every action, whether great or small, is referred to God as to its centre. This is what you must aim at by continual efforts and by a fidelity that knows no limits. But as success will not always be what you wish—for you would like to break all your bonds at once—you must bear patiently with your miseries and your ups and downs: be humble, and every thing, sin excepted, which helps you to this, should be precious in your eyes.

31st March, 1816.

Divine Providence has willed to deprive you of all sensible support, in order to attach your heart to that of Jesus Christ, your Spouse. If you were faithful, my child, what a well-spring of grace and merit you would find: obedience that is pure and practised for God alone, liberty of heart so rare and so precious, for it is the source of peace, and produces here below a foretaste of Heaven.

Our life is rather Divine than human; it is the burial of which the Apostle spoke, when he said to the Christians of his day: "Buried with Him [Christ] in baptism, in whom also you are risen again by the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him up from the dead." To produce this happy result, the baptism must be continued by the waters of humiliation, privations, suffering, above all by sacrificing our natural affections; and when we consent to be plunged in this cleansing bath we may soon expect a glorious resurrection. Work at the attainment of this happy state. You are on the right road and have only to advance with courage and perseverance. Let us make use of every thing to become holy.

August 5th, 1816.

It is a sorrow to me, dear Adrienne, not to have a moment to comfort you, for you seem in trouble. No doubt our Lord will take this task upon Himself. Let Him act; give yourself up, in all confidence, to His Hand whose touch is gentle and yet crucifying. . . . God alone and His Cross! That heart is too avaricious for whom God does not suffice. Read Father Rigoleuc—since you like his writings; he will teach you what it is to love our Lord without admixture of any self-seeking. I beg of you constantly to study how to die slowly, but

mortify only the interior senses. You are not strong enough for bodily penances. Leave them off until you hear to the contrary.

You draw a fine picture of my guidance, in your letter. I could not help smiling. Poor child, you regret the past, because it was pleasanter than the present, and have not the wit to understand that what is most needful is to suffer without support or consolation. . . .

Good-bye, dear child, I am very hard on you to-day. If I were more what I should be, my prayers would uphold you at a distance, but I am worth nothing. I leave you to another who knows better how to set about it, and will do you good.

March 17th, 1817.

I cannot let my want of leisure prevent me, dear Adrienne, from answering your last letter, brought me by N. . . . How glad I should have been to meet you with her, but the time was not come. You are at Grenoble, and I hope to see you in some months; they will pass like a flash of lightning: the time we shall spend together will go even more quickly, and the thought of the approaching separation will mingle with our present enjoyment. That is a picture of this world; the thorn with the flower, the cross with the pleasure. I well understand your wish to die, to enjoy for ever without alloy the embraces of your God. St. Teresa desired it so vehemently that even her energetic language failed to express the longing that consumed her to be united to her Spouse. Should we desire it as she did? That, alas, does not depend on us. We must love like her for this, have her great heart, her noble and generous soul, and above all labour as she did; and we are so weak, so small, so narrow-minded (these, if I remember right, are your own expressions). Do not let us then wish to die yet. We have done too little for our God and for His work.

I confess also, dear Adrienne, I should be doubly sorry, if I saw you finish your career still so imperfect. My affection for you rouses in me a kind of ambition, which makes me wish ardently for your advancement in the practice of the solid virtues of our holy state: a great courage, and strength of soul, which will raise you above those feminine weaknesses which often make us so petty, so ridiculous, and so unbearable to every one. God alone bears with us, because He is essential Charity. The way He puts up with us is a marvel to me! But if the adorable Trinity has this love for an imperfect and miserable creature, what must not be God's predilection for one endowed with all the qualities I have mentioned? This is the explanation of God's love for and liberality towards such saints as St. Teresa, SS. Catherine of Genoa and Sienna, and so many others whom you know. Believe

that the God who so loves to communicate Himself, would give His love in the same way again, if He found hearts well disposed. And where should such hearts be found if not in the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus? Let us meditate, pray, and act. Above all let us die to all that is not God, and God in turn will live in us so that we may say with the great Apostle: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

May 7th, 1819.

I must tell you, dear Adrienne, that your letter was a consolation to me. I think I saw in it a more determined will to suffer, more taste for humility, more forgetfulness of creatures, more of the other religious virtues that flow from this. How I, who have your well-being so much at heart, shall rejoice if at last you begin once for all to walk in the path of abnegation. This path is painful to nature, it is true, but our Lord loves it, and it leads to true happiness. Whilst most people go through life seeking to gather flowers, by avoiding what is painful, and find only sharp thorns, the few who alone are truly wise are resigned to expect nothing but thorns beneath their feet, and these soon meet only with flowers; happiness, such as it exists on earth, is to be found by them alone. Tread in this path, my child. It is rugged at first but soon grows easy and even beautiful.

November 5th, 1819.

I am grateful to you for having tried to lighten by your letter the sacrifice I made in leaving you so promptly after looking forward for a whole year to seeing you again. To have had only a few minutes with you was a good sample of our pleasures here on earth; we cannot enjoy them in peace, because we cannot stop the flight of time, as a poet says. At least these few minutes spent with you were sufficient to assure me of the consolation of which your good dispositions had held out the promise. Your letter confirmed this still more. When we meet we shall only have to bless the Heart of Jesus together. *Benedic, anima mea, Domino: et omnia quæ intra me sunt nomini sancto ejus.*

Meditate this Psalm all through. It is the 102nd. You will find it very fit to express your gratitude. Of course you will be happy if you keep in the *computari pro nihilo*. It is the source of the river of peace. We watch this river flowing on, but few are courageous enough to trace it back to its source. It is lost underground, and to find it we must stoop low, annihilate ourselves, disappear from all eyes, bury ourselves alive! I repeat it: few souls walk by this path; they reach the opening, but there they stay.

What were you thinking of, my poor child—I do not mean

in comparing our Rules with those of St. Ignatius, for it is impossible not to see that they come from the same source—but in your other comparison, which I will not even name? It is there your judgment goes astray. All I can say is: Pray for me. When shall I also be counted for nothing? At least justice will be done me then, for instead of being "First Mother" as you call me, I am really only a shadow. What his humility led St. Bernard to say of himself is literally true of me.

May 26th, 1820.

Confine your attention to your own employment, and shut yourself up in the sense of your nothingness, and if charity or zeal calls you forth, lead hearts to union, to unity, and then return to your inner sanctuary, like the dove to the clefts in the rock. *In foraminibus petræ, in caverna maceriæ.* Good can come from you only through these divine portals: humility and interior spirit. These will be the doors of love. Love cannot enter a heart if these two entrances are wanting. There is a great deal to be said on this subject. I cannot say it because I have much to attend to. Your piety will enable you to understand the things of God, and if the Holy Ghost once takes possession of the powers of your soul, I shall be silent, and you will be so also, because He will Himself teach you all truth.

April 5th, 1821.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus confers a singular favour on a soul when He calls it to that state of abasement and nothingness of which you speak to me in your last letter. The author of the *Following of Christ* knew this very well when he wrote: *Ama nesciri, et computari pro nihilo.* "Love to be unknown and esteemed as nothing." He was even more pious than he was learned, and his prayer for himself was that he might live and die in obscurity. In spite of all researches even his name is uncertain, and so his prayer was heard. You will thus be the rival of the greatest saints, and, I confess, I can desire nothing better for all those I love.

Enter, my child, on this road, and with all your heart confine yourself therein. Exterior and sensible things are lost sight of, but what treasures are disclosed! Where are the gems and precious things, gold, silver, pearls, rare marbles found but deep down in the earth or sea? In nature everything contains a lesson, and do we not find something similar in a hidden and obscure life? It is in this interior solitude that you will fathom the meaning of the Divine words:—*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* Who will explain them to you? No human learning; He alone whose teaching they are. And

to whom will He explain them? To the great, the learned? No, to the little, the humble, the simple, and to hidden souls. As then, my child, you wish to love our Lord, enter into His merciful plans and rejoice to be little and to do little. Be faithful to the least observances, give good example, and you will further His work more than by your knowledge and your words.

July 3rd, 1822.

How many defects I should like to banish from your heart, and how far it still is from being purified and detached from all things. This, it is true, is the work of a lifetime; so no discouragement, but also, no holding back. Join to your efforts ardent and persevering prayer. Say with David: "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?" How far we still are from the place of rest! As to distance, indeed, it is not far off; it is in our own heart. When all the passions are subdued, this becomes pure, and then the Spouse comes to dwell therein. That is the sweet repose of the soul that has fought long and perseveringly. Humility, forgetfulness of self, fidelity to little things will lead you, my child, to this longed-for and cherished goal. I will help you by my wishes and my poor prayers.

April, 1824.

What can I say at a distance to one whose state changes so often? It seems that you have always something to suffer, that you are never without the Cross. That augurs well; if you are generous and faithful, it is the safest way, it brings us nearest to God and makes us love Him more. If we understood this, we should never again wish for enjoyment. It is, alas, exactly the contrary spirit which makes us feel so much weariness and disgust. We wish to live and to feel that we live; and we feel that we have to die. This absolute death is a scare to cowardly souls, and to those who argue about things. For those who are generous and docile, it is the beginning of rest in God, and peace is at once its fruit and its reward. I shall be almost surprised if you understand what I say. I feel this happiness perhaps outside myself, and I feel that I do not understand it enough to speak of it clearly. I should like to see you and talk over it with you. Patience, this will come some day.

Again, my child, we must not forget that all passes like a shadow. God alone remains the same; He is therefore our only friend. He alone will stay, when all others leave us. Our fellow-creatures are weak and powerless to do us good. Let us rely then upon God alone. I leave you to Him, dear Adrienne, with the assurance of my deep affection in this life and beyond it.

4th November, 1825.

You know what I desire for you : a heart purified from all human affection, a forgetfulness of self that will allow you to harbour no selfish thought ; God's love predominant over all other love, and His interests your only passion. How this absorbing desire for His glory would expand your soul, and raise it above those lower regions of all that is material and natural ; in these regions autumnal rain-clouds and storms are ever forming and re-forming. We have, alas, lived there long enough. Is it not time to rise to a higher level ? What has it profited us to drag along in the mire ? We have kept our weakness, our miseries, and have not had courage to make use of those strong wings, which our Lord has bought for us by His Precious Blood, to free our heart and to enable it to rise to Heaven, to union with Himself. "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest." No rest therefore so long as we are still crawling on the earth. We must leave it behind, and say with the Psalmist : *Volabo et requiescam.*

Do not be over anxious about your want of feeling, and of power ; nor even your want of constancy in the efforts you have to make to acquire virtue. Meet these little tempests by an absolute will not of your own accord to give way a jot, and by bearing these miseries with even patience and without sadness or discouragement. Turn your mind from all these thoughts to those that concern God's glory. Throw yourself a little more into your studies, or your work with the children. If you have time over, ask to take some work off others, making thus acts of charity and humility as occasion offers. If we wish to become holy, how many opportunities, how many means we shall find. God will throw them constantly in our way.

Make a trial of it, peacefully surrender your family into His Hands, become a good religious, and all the rest "shall be added unto you."

August, 1825.

Fiat. We must forget self and die ! Let us never lose sight of this maxim, it ought to be that of a religious of the Sacred Heart. For the future, be determined to correspond by constant fidelity to the grace you have received. Then your Superiors will be able to make use of you when and how God wills. What an assurance of peace for you to find yourself thus guided. Let there be a like surrender of yourself into their hands as to their way of treating you. It is God who acts through them whether the form be harsh or gentle. May faith direct you, and every thing will turn to your good.

July 10th, 1826.

Your letter, telling me of the signal graces you have received, was a great pleasure to me. Did I not often tell you that all good things come to us by the Cross? After so many trials and combats, a long and painful illness, you may at last exclaim with St. John of the Cross, though no doubt with less truth than he:

In a dark night
O happy lot!
Forth unobserved I went.

Now, my child, you must keep most carefully this peace. It is the gift of the Sacred Heart to you, and you must look on it as most precious. Fidelity must be its safeguard, humility its dear companion. Confidence will bring it back to you if any selfish thought has banished it for a time; lastly, continual and loving thought of God will establish it firmly in your soul, nay, will increase it, so that you will be able to say with St. Paul, that this peace "surpasseth all understanding." As you say so truly, whatever temptations or trials await you, you must keep to this first principle, ever united with the will of God. He has given you proofs enough of love to keep you from ever doubting Him again.

November 9th, 1827.

I think I perceive at last that you are beginning to understand and love true virtue, not with your imagination, but with your heart. You see now that perfection does not lie in any thing out of the beaten track, in the lofty flights of the unitive way, but in becoming little, obscure, simple, docile as a child, zealous for the good of souls, but without strain of mind, believing that others can succeed better, and satisfied to help them on, keeping below them. How much it has cost you to attain to this! You cried out for "Peace, Peace," but peace dwells only in a simple and humble heart, and yours was filled only with itself. Be wise, and learn by your own experience. Suffer yourself to be led like a lamb that knows nothing except how to obey.

Mother Adrienne Michel's after-life carried out the lessons so beautifully put before her in these letters. She was a finished example of fidelity and devotedness to those with whom she lived, and advancing years brought only increase to her fervour and piety. Her most happy and peaceful death took place at Layrac in the seventieth year of her age, on September 7th, 1858, the fifty-first anniversary of her Profession.

CHAPTER XXV

THE TRINITA DEI MONTI. 1826–1830.

The greatest glory of a building is not in its stones nor in its gold. Its glory is in its age and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity.
RUSKIN.

THE work of Mother Barat which we have been describing was done under the pressure of ever-increasing anxiety with regard to the prospects of religion in France. In 1825, she wrote to Mother Bigeu: "Troubles are thickening; you see what we are threatened with." And in the following year to Mother Geoffroy: "How bad the times are growing;" then she added: "We are more than ever bound to confidence and self-surrender, otherwise we should be cast down and unable to look difficulties in the face."

Charles X., who succeeded his brother, Louis XVIII., in 1824, was religious and well-meaning, but his government was wanting in firmness, and his timidity led him into a wavering policy. His leading idea was to conciliate the irreligious and revolutionary party, and with this object concessions injurious to religion and at variance with justice were often made. It required a stronger hand at the helm to stem the tide of revolution. Neither was the Church in France so organized at that time as to present an unbroken front to the enemies of religion, and the dangerous doctrines of de Lammenais tended to weaken it still further by disunion. The Jesuits, as usual, had to bear the brunt of the storm. "The Fathers are exulting," wrote Mother Geoffroy, on December 6th, 1826, from

Paris, "in being counted worthy to suffer for the name they bear." That such was indeed their feeling is confirmed by the following extract from a letter of Father Rozaven's to Mother Bigeu, written six days later: "You must expect bad weather, my child, for you will very likely feel the counter-shock of the storm brewing against us. Your consolation must be that opposition strengthens the works of God. It is written: 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake.' If the enemies of religion left us in peace, there would be good ground for alarm, as it would show that they no longer feared us."

Father Varin was full of the same spirit: "Persecution, no doubt, is coming," he said to the nuns in Paris, "but it is aimed less at the servants than at the Master. And how gladly the servants should welcome it, when they reflect that if they were willing to put off the livery they wear, far from being persecuted, they would be praised and honoured!" Then, with his usual resolute gaiety, he added: "It is only twenty-six years since we came back from Germany, and we have already been four times suppressed. It may well happen a fifth time. We cannot do better than leave ourselves with confidence in God's Hands."

There was no improvement the following year. Mother Barat wrote to Mother Duchesne in March, 1827: "How you would groan if I described to you our political position, and all the hatred shown to the Society of Jesus and to every thing good? What will become of us! God only knows, but we must pray hard." "You share all my anxieties and cares," she wrote in the same year to Mother Giraud, "we have a slippery and insecure footing at the edge of a precipice. A miracle only can save us, and we do not deserve that miracle."

The Revolution had shown the necessity of providing for Christian education, but the consequent popularity of the numerous colleges opened by the Jesuits excited the jealousy of their opponents. As, however, these colleges were legally established, they could only be attacked by violent measures. An outcry was therefore raised against them by the radicals and

liberals, which induced Charles' minister, de Martignac, to sacrifice them for the sake of his own popularity and the safety of the throne. He easily induced the King to share his views, and, after various minor concessions to the popular outcry, Charles allowed the Jesuit colleges to be closed throughout France in the summer of 1828. Mother Barat was at Amiens when, in fulfilment of this unjust decree, the eight hundred boys and young men of the famous college of Saint-Acheul bade a lasting good-bye to their masters and to one another. "If you knew what heart-aches the closing of Saint-Acheul causes!" she wrote a few days after. "We are once more very unhappy. Pray God that He may uphold us." And, when writing to announce her visit, she said: "I think I shall come on Saturday, but make no preparations; any thing festive would be quite out of place. At this sad time, our joys must be mingled with tears. I shall be happy, if I can allay your anxieties about the future. At least we can encourage one another to bear them well. We are not the only ones struck; let us look at and imitate our models."

The revolutionary party, that hated, as we have seen, even the name of the Society of Jesus, hated equally that of the Sacred Heart, and this symbol of the love of God for man was the object of public scorn and ridicule. Mother Barat only redoubled her devotion towards it, and tried, by the solemnity with which the feast was kept in the chapel of the convent in Paris, to atone for some of the many insults of the world outside. Nine novices took their vows on that day, in spite of the threatening aspect of affairs, and Mother Barat often reminded her daughters at this time of the duty, more than ever incumbent upon them, of being *victims* to fill up what was wanting of the sufferings of Christ. "The Sacred Heart of our Lord has placed you in the midst of all this wickedness," she said, "to act as a barrier and rampart between the people and God's wrath. You are called to share His office, to be Saviours with Him. You must offer yourselves to Him for the world, as He offered Himself for us to His Father. But what a contrast between the victims!

How far we are from fulfilling our Lord's expectation when He chose us! This is the Cross that crushes me beneath its weight!" To her the closing of the Jesuits' colleges was the first breach in the dyke that kept out the flood of anarchy, and she foresaw that great calamities were coming. It might be that her work in France was to be checked and made impossible; but if this should be allowed by God, she knew that some other field of labour would be opened to her, and as she looked around, Rome was, of all places, the one in which she would have wished to see a house established.

Access thither was providentially opened to her just at this time. The following letter which she wrote in January, 1828, to Mother Armande de Causans, who had succeeded Mother Bigeu as Superior at Turin, gives us an outline of the preliminaries of the foundation:

Paris, January 19th, 1828.

I have something to tell you which must not be spoken of yet. Oh, my God, at what a time dost Thou wish this work to be undertaken, and what materials dost Thou deign to use! I am full of confusion, and if prudence allowed it, I should let every one know; it would be the second volume of Brother Giles' ignorant old woman. But to come to facts. Father Rozaven's prediction has come true more quickly than he hoped; whilst he was trying hard to get us established in Rome, the Nuncio has been to the fountain-head, and he has succeeded beyond all expectation. I will give you the details another time, for now I must cut the story short.

There is in Rome a beautiful house with large gardens, upon a hill. It belongs to France. The Sovereign Pontiff has asked the King for it and a part of its revenues, for the Religious of the Sacred Heart. The ministry that has just gone out had granted the request, but as the affair was not concluded it had to be begun over again with the new ministry. They voted unanimously, which is quite unusual, and if they are in power one short month more, the donation will be in our hands. But we have enemies, and the whole thing must be kept secret until three or four of ours are on the spot. Who will be the pioneers? Providence has pointed them out. The Nuncio has asked for you. Father Rozaven expressed the same wish. I believe it to be God's will, and have consented. Your formal orders will follow in a month or six weeks. However, I shall try to make

the business drag on until after Easter. I thought of giving you Mother Euphrosyne Faux for your first companion; she is very resourceful. If you accept her, answer directly, that I may send her to you, as well as the person who will take your place at Turin. You must also get a lay-sister ready to go with you, and if you could take a second choir religious, speaking Italian, it would be a great help. Three or four are enough at present. . . . When all is ready we will send you a code of instructions, the chief part of which will have been drawn up by his Excellency the Nuncio. This kind friend of ours wishes that his work, for it is his, should succeed very quickly, and the least obstacle pains, though it does not discourage him.

The papal nuncio in France, Mgr Lambruschini, had a great esteem for the Society of the Sacred Heart and for Mother Barat. When Pope Leo XII. spoke to him of his wish that a school should be founded for the education of the daughters of the Roman nobility, he immediately thought of her, and wrote to propose the matter. On his way to Paris in the preceding year, he had visited the convent at Turin, and had been so much struck by the Superior, Mother Armande de Causans, that he asked for her to be sent as Superior of the new convent. Eventually Mother Adèle Cahier was joined to the party.

The convent of the Trinità dei Monti stands on the Pincian Hill, at the top of the magnificent flight of steps which lead up from the Piazza di Spagna. From the height of its two towers all Rome can be seen spread out below, while the towers themselves are landmarks visible from far around. The convent and church were built in 1475 by Charles VIII. of France. He established there the Order of Minims, or Hermits of St. Francis of Paula, which had been recently founded, and they continued to inhabit it until 1828, when, their numbers being reduced to two, the convent was made over to the Society of the Sacred Heart.

On the 9th of February of that year, the Comte de la Ferronnays, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, intimated to to Mgr Lambruschini that his wish had been granted. The royal letters patent were to the effect that "the church and

convent of the Trinità dei Monti as well as the buildings, garden, and dependencies should be made over to the *Dames françaises du Sacré-Cœur* with the object of establishing therein a house of education for young ladies. They were to enjoy these properties on the same conditions as the French Minims, without power to transfer, alienate, and exchange the said property on any terms whatsoever."

When Mgr Lambruschini communicated this letter to Mother Barat, he told her at the same time that by order of His Holiness a lodging in the convent of St. Sylvestro *in capite* would be prepared for the religious destined for the foundation. Mother Barat sent a letter of thanks to the Minister, and she wrote also to the Pope to offer the humble services of her Society, and express her gratitude. In course of time she received a Brief from Leo XII., communicated to her by the Nuncio, who, when he sent it, added a few lines to say how rejoiced he was at sending her such a *present.*

The Brief was couched in terms of the utmost kindness. Amongst other things it said : " As our great desire is that the children of our noble families should be educated in a manner suited to their position, and as we judge your Institute to be best fitted to procure that end, we have resolved before the Lord to invite some of your religious to undertake the work. We are eagerly awaiting their arrival, persuaded as we are, that those whom you choose for this work, will have every aptitude necessary for forming their pupils to piety, whilst giving them suitable instruction in the arts and sciences ; and that they will consider it their first duty to set them the example of every virtue. We congratulate you on the great good, which by God's help you are effecting in your own country, and hope that by His grace we shall see the same fruits of your labours in our States."

When Mother Barat decided upon taking Mother Armande de Causans to be Superior of the house in Rome, she named Mother de Limminghe to replace her at Turin. It was a terrible blow, and after vainly representing all the reasons she could think of, why she was unfit for the charge, Mother

de Limminghe is said to have fallen ill of grief; it is easy to believe this from the energetic tone of the letters Mother Barat wrote to her on the subject.

There is no doubt, my dear child [she said on the 1st of June, 1828], that it would be much pleasanter to live under obedience, and far from all communications with creatures. I felt this most keenly during my retreat. But where then would be our sacrifice, and what should we render to the Lord for all He has done for us? This is the only painful cross I know on earth; other crosses are flowers, and a spouse of the Sacred Heart ought to suffer. Bear then your burden with courage and generosity; you owe this mark of gratitude to our Lord for the favour He has shown you in calling you to the Society of the Sacred Heart. Forget yourself, my dear child; you have thought of yourself long enough, now devote all your faculties to the glory of God.

[A little later she wrote again:] Would it be a proof of love for our Lord if you left the battle-field just when it is time to fight, and obtain the conquest of the souls so dear to Him? Yet this is what you would be doing, if you sought to escape from your charge. Happily, you are ready to take a refusal, and to bear your burden until death, if God so wills. Add to this disposition those of faith and confidence; rejoice in the obligations under which you lie to sanctify yourself twice over by sacrificing, at all times, what it costs most to give up, . . . quiet, and so to say, your very soul; for what uneasiness and interior anguish are involved in the care of others, when in some sense we are answerable for their salvation! Yet such cares and anxieties are pleasing to our Lord; it is thus He sought the lost sheep. Who can read unmoved to-day's Gospel? The Samaritan Woman. Ah, let us say with her: "Give me this water!" One drop is enough to kindle the flame of His love in our hearts. Zeal for the salvation of souls will follow, and we shall then no longer wish to labour less, to suffer less.

Such remonstrances were efficacious. Mother de Limminghe promised with God's help to show herself less unworthy to be called Mother Barat's child. She laboured with all her strength and with great success at the post in which God had set her. "Oh no," she exclaimed, "I do not refuse to suffer, to become a victim for the Society, for the love of which I would sacrifice my life a thousand times!"

The three pioneers left Turin on March 15th, and were in

Rome on the 31st. Their first visit to the Trinità showed how much there was to do before the building would be habitable. The convent had, in 1798, been abandoned by the Minims, and afterwards occupied as barracks. When the troops left it, it was in a state of dilapidation not to be described. The church had been used as stables ; the pictures, marbles, and other valuables had been carried off. All but one of the twelve side chapels were stripped bare ; the frescoes had suffered grievously from the damp, and the sacristy contained only what was indispensably necessary for saying Mass. The house also wanted much repair. Except on the ground-floor all the doors and windows were wanting, and even the tiled floors of the cells and corridors had been taken up. Whilst the necessary repairs were being executed, the three foundresses continued to receive the kindest hospitality from the Franciscan nuns of San Sylvestro, and on May 20th, 1828, they took legal possession of the Trinità. From that time they went there daily to superintend and take their share in the work of restoration.

On the 23rd of that month, Mother Barat wrote to Mother de Causans :

I am longing to hear that you are able to go and live in your house, for your present mode of life is very trying for hard-working people like us. But it will not be long now. Ah, how necessary it is to keep close to God. The spirit that is raging in our beautiful France is really diabolical. I am terrified when I think what saints our Lord wants us to be ! My retreat has convinced me of this more than ever, and what a work has to be accomplished in myself and others to bring it about. He is urging on many, and I am thankful to see that you are amongst the number, for as the foundation-stone of so important a work, it is very necessary for His glory that you should labour hard at your own perfection. I am so convinced of this that I thank our Lord every day that He has so arranged matters as that I should have nothing to do with the foundation ; otherwise I should have trembled for its success. Now I have at least this security, that others will manage things better than I. When the Nuncio speaks of my coming to Rome, as he often does, I lose no time in turning the conversation ; and yet what a pleasure it would

be to me to see our Holy Father the Pope and Father Rozaven, in whom I have such confidence, and who would be so useful in helping me to be a less bad Superior. . . . This is a specimen of my sloth ; I own it to you. The end of a retreat is the right time for an act of humility and truth.

Early in June, Mother de Causans and her companions were able to remove to the Trinità. Their life there was exceedingly hard as they had few of what are considered the necessaries of life, and plenty of labour in preparing more habitable rooms for the second colony that was to follow shortly. Mother de Causans describes the state of things in the following letter to Mother Barat :

Trinità dei Monti, June 9th, 1828.

We have been here since Wednesday, and our Cardinal Protector and the Cardinal Vicar have already come to see us. The latter went all over the house, taking the greatest interest in every thing. He deplores our ruins and our bare walls, especially those in the church. Only one small chapel, that of St. Francis of Paula, is fit to use, and we hear Mass there every day. I am more concerned about this than anything else, for as it is a public church, it should do honour to the Sacred Heart, Decoration is much used here, and is very expensive. These are some of my anxieties, but I leave them all to God.

The Cardinal Vicar * has the inspection of all the convents in Rome, and as he was a religious, he strives to maintain or to re-establish the most perfect regularity in religious houses. He seems much pleased with the spirit of our Institute, and likes what I have told him of our Constitutions, &c. . . . To return to the Trinità, Reverend Mother, what disorder, what dust, what food ! It makes me laugh, but it is nearly killing me, and when I think what trouble it would give you to bury me, I determine not to depart for the other world. I say to Mother Faux : Keep me alive, and please do not poison us. Her cooking is really a curiosity, and she has some one to help her from outside, who knows less about it than she does herself, and who is more clever at eating than preparing the dishes. One tiresome thing is that no one here has any idea how poor we are, or how heavy our expenses. But God will not abandon His work. I always tell myself His seal would not be on it if the Cross were wanting.

* Cardinal Zurla, General of the Camaldolese.

A lay-sister was soon sent from Turin, who was all the more necessary as Pope Leo XII. wished the nuns to receive immediately two grown-up girls as pupils. When they had been three weeks at the convent he came to see how they were getting on, and Mother de Causans gives Mother Barat the account of this gracious visit.

We had been expecting His Holiness for three weeks [she wrote], though, alas, our preparations consisted only in spreading a carpet in the sacristy, and placing there a very modest arm-chair. Our two pupils were at recreation when they heard carriage wheels, and immediately the cry, "The Pope, the Pope," rang through the house. I flew to the entrance door, trying to assemble my numerous community, but the Holy Father came in by the door in the cloisters, with his guards and attendants. I knelt down and kissed his feet. Mothers Faux and Cahier did the same, and so did the two girls, and all the workmen, who had fallen on their knees when he came in. The Holy Father wished to hear me speak Italian, and the grace of obedience helped me to do so, but it was not a long conversation, and I gave up my place to the two girls, to each of whom in turn the Pope spoke. Before leaving, he expressed regret at not being able to go over the house, as he had at first intended to do, and assured me that he would come again for this purpose, as soon as the community was complete. He prayed with the fervour of a real saint in the chapel where we hear Mass, and his kindness deepened the feeling of veneration with which he had inspired me. . . . Our two girls expressed to the Holy Father their esteem for the Society, and affection for us. "I hope," he answered, "that you will be two trumpets to publish their praise, and second my wish to see this convent prosper and flourish." This is a bad translation of what was far more graciously put in Italian.

There was—and is to this day—much to admire in the old monastery of the Trinità dei Monti: its quadrangle surrounded by cloisters, on the walls of which the life and miracles of St. Francis of Paula are represented in frescoes, while each of the pilasters is decorated with a characteristic portrait of one of the kings of France,—the great chapter-room and refectory of the Minims, on the walls of which the Marriage Feast of Cana and other subjects are still to be seen

in fresco fairly preserved, and over the church, their library, from which a short terrace leads by the roof to the two towers on the front of the church,—these, with the memories of the monastic times, and the devotion to St. Francis of Paula which appears in every part of the old convent, made it a place of great interest to the new inhabitants, while it was also a field of work with much promise of future good.

The expected reinforcement arrived before Christmas, a colony of twelve, led by Mother de Charbonnel. Amongst them was Elizabeth Galitzin, who had come to make her vows in Rome under the guidance of her former director, Father Rozaven. By the time they arrived the convent was quite transformed.

Two English girls came with Mother de Charbonnel, and these, with two French and one German, laid the foundations of the school. Italians followed after a time, but the growth was slow at first. In September of the following year, the community and children had an audience of Pius VIII., who in the course of the year 1829 had succeeded Leo XII. on the Chair of Peter. The new Pope gave the same fatherly encouragement as his predecessor; adding kindly that when they were better known things would go well, which proved to be the case.

Mother Barat wrote of the Roman foundation to Mother Duchesne: "Alas, all these great servants of God think that we are instruments worthy of working for His glory, and yet in reality how little we do. We are not sufficiently dead to ourselves, and we fail in many other ways. All the favours our Lord shows us go to my heart; they are a crushing weight. We must have courage; pray for this for us all." And she wrote to Mother de Causans: "Tell all your community that we must respond to so many benefits by practical gratitude. Let us become true religious, meek and humble, in love with poverty and contempt. We are covered with it at present in France, but it comes from the wicked. It is always a grace, and we must try to profit by it."

In spite of the threatening aspect of affairs, two more

foundations were made in France in 1829, those of Avignon and Perpignan. Of the latter Mother Barat, who was always looking forward, wrote: "It will be, later on, our stepping-stone into Spain," and she sent Mother Henriette Grosier to take charge of the house. The foundation at Avignon was made in the town house of the Marquis de Vidaud, who was for so many years a staunch friend of the Society and of its Superior General. His second daughter, the great friend of Aloysia Jouve at Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, had entered the noviceship in 1819, and when, in October, 1829, Mother de Charbonnel came to Avignon, to arrange about the foundation, Louise de Vidaud accompanied her. Monsieur de Vidaud's house was too small except for a beginning, and the following year he made all the arrangements for the removal of the community into a larger one, even working himself like a common workman at the alterations.

CHAPTER XXVI

REVOLUTION. 1830.

You will find, on fairly thinking of it, that it is his restraint that is honourable to man, not his liberty. . . . It is restraint that characterizes the higher creature and betters the lower creature: and from the ministry of the archangel to the labour of the insect, from the poising of the planets to the gravitation of the grain of dust, the power and glory of all creatures and all matter consists in their obedience, not in their freedom. The sun has no liberty, a dead leaf has much. The dust of which you are formed has no liberty. Its liberty will come with its corruption. — RUSKIN.

THE Government of Charles X. did not long reap any benefit from its cowardly policy. In 1829, the Ministry had fallen into complete disrepute, and every day the aspect of affairs grew more threatening. Mother Barat wrote in March of that year to Mother de Rozeville:

Fiat. We must suffer; what else are we to do on earth, especially in such sad times when God is so much offended? Each one of us ought to be a victim of immolation and expiation for the sins of men. Perhaps other more perfect souls have to expiate our faults, which we renew instead of cancelling. How different from what ought to be! I am so ashamed when I think of it, that I should like to hide myself from the eyes of all. Well would it be were I alone guilty. . . . I am not thinking of any one in particular, but I only feel, in general, that we are all blameworthy and far from fulfilling the noble end of our vocation.

A few days later, in a letter to Mother Emilie Giraud, she wrote in the same strain:

It would take volumes to unburden our hearts and describe all they suffer. It would require the pen of Jeremias the Prophet, but at least we can apply to ourselves his Lamentations. If only we knew

how to make use of these evil times to detach our hearts from every thing, and unite ourselves to the Sovereign Good, without the admixture of any earthly affection! Alas, so many lessons, so many sacrifices, so many disappointments have produced only conviction, not action. . . . Let us hasten then; time presses; the Bridegroom is without, and He knocks, how loudly sometimes! We must be dull or drowsy not to hasten forward to meet Him and open unto Him. . . . How will our children be able to resist the flood of iniquity? Oh, redouble your zeal for all of them, rich and poor, and inculcate especially the fear of God and horror of sin. We have not ourselves the lively faith which would give our words the strength of a two-edged sword, and yet, was it ever more necessary? . . . Times of extraordinary trial call for the practice of extraordinary virtue.

"Do not forget that it is at the foot of the Cross that a spouse of the Sacred Heart is formed," she said in a conference given about this time. The loss of several of her religious increased her sorrow. Among these was Mother de Peñeranda, who died Superior of the convent at Lille, and Mother Henriette Girard who had been her companion from Grenoble to Poitiers in 1806, and since then had worked hard and done good service to the Society. The perfect happiness with which they all faced death was her great consolation in the grief of their loss.

In May, she met with an accident which threatened to lame her for life. To shut a window, she stood upon a table which gave way, and in her fall she injured her foot. The result seemed at first to be a simple sprain, but it proved to be much more serious, and amputation was threatened unless perfect rest for the foot was secured. To obtain this, and yet prevent complete isolation, Mother Eugénie de Gramont had a wicker basket made, in which Mother Barat spent her days. She was carried in it from one place to another in the house, and it was put on wheels to roll her about the garden. The mortification of such a state of dependence was especially trying to one so active as Mother Barat, whose movements might without much exaggeration be called habitually "as quick as thought." But the trial only showed how perfect was her patience. "God knows what I need," she said to the novices.

"I was too active, and must expiate it." If she had to go downstairs, the Sister who took care of her, whose memory was none of the best and who had many other things to do, would push or pull the basket to the top of the staircase, and then leave her whilst she went in search of some one strong enough to carry her down; and Mother Barat, with a smile upon her lips, would wait sometimes very long until they came. A child, passing by the chapel once at half-past nine, saw Mother Barat there in her basket, near the altar. Through some mistake, no one had come to take her upstairs since Mass, and she gently asked that they might be reminded to come and fetch her, saying she had been forgotten.

After many months of complete inaction, she began to walk a little on crutches, but those who saw her were afraid she would fall from her great weakness. "How could I fall with all of you around me?" she said laughingly to reassure them. "Indeed it is true of me: 'He hath given His angels charge over thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone!'"

In February, 1830, she wrote to Mother Duchesne:

Your two letters of December last were a great pleasure to me. I feel to the depths of my soul what you say of your love for your Mother and for the Society, and what recollections your words bring back of the happy time we spent together in the calm and solitude of the heights of Sainte-Marie. . . . Times are sadly changed for me. I live in the midst of a whirl of business and of great people, whom I avoid as much as possible. As a rest, I long for your vast forests and the banks of the Mississippi. Shall I never see them? In the meantime, for nine months past, I have been lying in my bed or in a basket, unable to walk a step, even with crutches. The doctors say it will last three months, and I am afraid it will be life-long. I see that you have your crosses. If I could but give you a little sketch of those God sends to the Society! But it must spread and strengthen by the Cross and with the Cross! Let us then take courage and cling to the Cross till our last breath!

In the Hotel Biron, during this summer, there were fifty novices, and there were a hundred and fifty children in the school, but in spite of this apparent prosperity, dark clouds

were lowering on the horizon. The children kept two great holidays in July, that on the 11th to celebrate the conquest of Algiers, and that of the 22nd, the feast of Mother Barat's patron saint, St. Mary Magdalen. The day had never been kept with greater signs of joy, but those present could not but remark the contrast between the brightness of the scene and the deep sadness of Mother Barat's face. Her eyes were full of tears, and when Mother de Gramont asked her why she was so melancholy, she said it was because it was the last time she should see these children gathered together.

Father Varin went on the same day to see the novices, and told them that a great disturbance was threatening. When they inquired what he meant, his only answer was, half in fun and half seriously, to ask them if they were ready for execution. Then in all earnest he went on to tell them, that when the disturbance came they were to rejoice even in the midst of the trials it might bring them personally. "If it forces its way inside your walls, take refuge in the Heart of Jesus. Keep Its doors fast shut, and rest in peace." When the novices told Mother Barat what Father Varin had been saying to them, and she saw how high their spirits rose at the thought of martyrdom, she congratulated them on their ardour, but added it would not prevent her from taking all possible measures to keep them in safety.

Three days later the famous ordinances appeared, by which the King suspended the liberty of the press, dissolved the Chambers, and summoned a new Parliament. Early the following day, Monday, July 26th, the streets of Paris were filled with excited groups of people. The editors declared that the ordinances were illegal, and that they would publish their newspapers as usual. The gendarmes then closed the printing-presses, thus adding thousands of disaffected workmen to the ever-growing mob. On the 27th, the violence was such that the troops were called out to fire on the people. On the 28th, the riot became a revolution. The troops refused to fire, and deserted their colours. Charles X. recalled the ordinances and dismissed his ministers. But these conciliatory measures

were unavailing. There was only one thing to be done. He abdicated in favour of his grandson, the Duc de Bordeaux, and left the country. The Provisional Government had, however, already been organized in Paris, and it offered the throne to Louis Philippe, who on the 7th of August was proclaimed King of the French.

On the 27th of July many of the children were removed from the Hotel Biron by their parents, and Mothers de Charbonnel and Ducis, who had gone with Mother Eugénie de Gramont to Conflans, about three miles off, were five hours in making their way back to Paris, through the insurgents of the Faubourg St. Antoine. Mother Eugénie had been very much out of health for some time, and as country air was believed to be the only remedy, she was staying in a little house that had been uninhabited for twenty years, belonging to Mgr de Quélen, the Archbishop of Paris. It stood on the slope leading from the Seine to Charenton, and between the country house of the Archbishop and that of the seminary, nearly on the site of the present convent. Her one companion was Mother de Constantin, niece of the celebrated Comte de Maistre. She was still quite young, and full of enterprise and energy.

On the morning of the 28th, the roar of cannon awoke every one in Paris to the knowledge of the fact that the Revolution was in full progress. As it was impossible to foresee how far things would go, and as Mother Barat's lameness added much to their anxiety, the wisest course was thought to be that she should join Mother de Gramont at Conflans, and she went there in the course of the day, under the escort of her nephew, Stanislaus.

Conflans was very quiet that morning [wrote Mother de Constantin], and no news had reached us yet of the riots in Paris, when the sound of wheels was heard, and the carriage stopped at our door. I saw Mother Barat's crutches leaning against the window, and we rushed down to meet her. Our joy was short-lived when we heard what was going on in Paris. Our Mother was terribly anxious, and the night was spent rather in prayer than sleep. Early the next morning we learnt that the students had left the seminary during the night, and

as the Archbishop's house was also empty, we were quite isolated where we were, and beyond all reach of help. About two o'clock in the afternoon a confused noise of shouting and cries was heard which drew nearer and nearer. I made all haste to close the outside shutters of our windows that the house might seem uninhabited, and I had hardly done so when about three hundred rough young men, belonging, as we afterwards heard, to the veterinary school at Alfort, came to the gate with the intention of pillaging the seminary. Finding no way of getting in they gave up the attempt, and went off with cries of: "Death to the priests!" and threats of setting fire to the building.

Our Mother General was much upset by this alarm, and did not recover from it for more than an hour. It was clear we could not remain in this unprotected state, and Mother de Gramont told me to go with Sister Rosalie and find a lodging in the village. We dressed up in whatever came to hand, like women of the labouring classes. I had on a patched brown skirt, a black apron, a white jacket, a little shawl, and on my head a night-cap nearly covered by a white and blue handkerchief knotted at the side. When our Mothers saw me they had a hearty laugh, and I was delighted to have amused them in the midst of their anxiety. Our Mother General laid her hand on my head with a look of kindness and affection I shall never forget, as she said: "Go, my poor child, and may God go with you. Try to find us a lodging."

The task was not easy, and we met with nothing but refusals, as we went from house to house, thinking of the arrival at Bethlehem on Christmas night. Despairing of success, I went back to Conflans, but Mother de Gramont would not take no for an answer, and insisted on my making a further search. So, heartily invoking St. Joseph, I set out again, and rang the bell at a house near the last at which I had tried. When the door was opened, I asked to speak to the mistress, and was shown into a room on the ground-floor whence I could see an old lady sitting in an armchair at the far end of another room. The housekeeper who had let us in, asked me what our business was, and went to repeat to the old lady what I said. As soon as she heard the message, she got up and, coming towards me, said most graciously: "Come in, come in, good ladies; my whole house is at your service. There is no one on the floor above; you can have it all. Here is my kitchen, there is my garden, you can take what you like." I was overjoyed, and having thanked the good lady very warmly, went back to our Mothers, who lost no time in taking advantage of her kindness.

We had only spent one day in her house, when a gardener from the

Rue de Varenne made his way out to Conflans, and brought us messages and news of all, and a newspaper which let us know that Paris was quieter, and that traffic was being gradually resumed. On the 31st, we all left in the dress of seculars which a Sister brought us that morning. The only conveyance to be had was a small two-wheeled cart. Our Mothers got into this, and made room also for one Sister. The rest of us walked back to Paris, and reached the Rue de Varenne about twelve o'clock. Our Mother General did not arrive till some time later, as she had been obliged to go a long way round, and she afterwards told us her adventures. On the way, a man who seemed to have been drinking to the good success of the Revolution hailed their driver and asked to be given a lift; then, without waiting for an answer, jumped on to the box, and began to shout out with all his strength: *Vive la Chatte!* (*Charte*) *Vive la Chatte! Vive tout ce que vous voudrez!* Our Mothers could not help laughing, and he then turned round and looked at them, and when he noticed our Mother General's crutches he said: "Good-day, good Mother, I see you have hurt your foot. That is unlucky, for this cart will not get very far. Never mind, I am strong, and I will carry you whenever you cannot walk." Then he began to shout again: *Vive la Chatte.* His demonstrative Chartism was at least a safeguard for the travellers.

At the city gates they were stopped, and entrance was refused by the officials. Our Mothers produced the *Constitutionnel* which declared that traffic was resumed. It created a great sensation. "What, you have a copy of the *Constitutionnel?*" "Yes," the Mothers answered, "and if you like to look at it, it is quite at your service." The officials were delighted; took the paper, and opened the gate. However, before reaching the Rue de Varenne the cart was stopped by barricades, and our Mothers were obliged to get down. Then their convivial acquaintance kept his promise. He helped them over the difficult places, got planks that they might pass dry-shod over the pools of stagnant water, and even twice carried our Mother General where she could not walk. He only left her when the servants came up, and then he went off, having been well remunerated for his services. One word, "Courage," was all Mother Barat could say to the community who were waiting for her at the little gate at the bottom of the garden, and then she went with them to the house, and up to the chapel, where Benediction was given, as it was the feast of St. Ignatius, but the usual liturgical prayers were recited instead of sung, and the *Domine, salvum fac* was suppressed, as France had no longer a King.

During Mother Barat's absence there had been much to alarm those who remained at the Rue de Varenne. She had scarcely left on the morning of the 28th, when the dismal sounds of the tocsin kept up a perpetual sense of danger and disaster. The rattling sound of musketry was soon added, and the booming of cannon continued all day at intervals. At eleven o'clock at night the uproar in the neighbouring streets grew louder, and all went to the chapel to pray. Next morning the Rue de Varenne was barricaded, and dense masses of insurgents passed up the Boulevard singing the *Marseillaise*. Some of them climbed over the wall, and soon the bullets fell thick and fast in the garden. Close by, a bloody struggle was going on where the Swiss guards were defending the last white flag. When the danger was at its height, Annette de la Rochejaquelein, in the disguise of a peasant, rushed breathlessly up to the house, heeding neither bullets nor rioters, determined to share Mother Barat's danger, or to bring her help.

On Sunday, August 1st, a man in a great-coat, and with the indispensable tricolour cockade, made his way into the noviceship. None could help laughing when they recognized Father Varin. "*Ita, Pater*," were his first words, and then he went on to reassure his listeners as to the good that would ultimately accrue to the Society from passing events, lamentable as they were. "If you are faithful to God, God will be faithful to you," he assured them.

Mother Barat a few days later impressed on every one the same lesson of confidence in God. When speaking to the community and novices, she said: "The throne has fallen, but the Church still stands; the Church has an immortal life, and you belong to her; have confidence then. I might have dreaded for you the dangers of prosperity, but persecution I do not fear."

The unsettled state of France, and especially of Paris, made it necessary to remove the novices elsewhere, and until a permanent abode had been secured, Mother Barat sent them in little parties of three or four at a time to the various convents of the Society in France. The task of seeking the new house for the noviceship, she reserved for herself.

On August 7th, in a letter to Mother Eugénie Audé, she said:

I have been unable, alas, to write to you for many months, my child. All this time I have been suffering much; and now, far severer pain of mind and heart is added to what I had before. The newspapers will have told you of the revolution that has just taken place. Every one is leaving Paris, and we have dispersed the noviceship. Only enough nuns are staying at the Rue de Varenne to take care of the few children still remaining there. We might now send you out reinforcements, but there is no money for the expenses of the journey, for we had not paid our debts. There would have been plenty of every thing if we had had two years more of prosperity, but all is broken up now. I am going to start in three days with our Mothers, but I do not know where I am going to. Lame as I am, I must again set off on my travels.

On the 10th, she left Paris with Mother Eugénie de Gramont. Her parting words to the community were an injunction to keep up the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, in spite of their diminished numbers. "It is prayer that will save us," she added earnestly.

Since 1824, there had been in the Paris school three daughters of the Marquis de Nicolay; he had also two sons at the Jesuit college of St. Acheul. When the latter establishment was closed, the boys were sent to Fribourg in Switzerland, where the Jesuits had a large school, and their father, foreseeing fresh troubles in France, took a small country house at Giviziers, about a mile and a half's distance, with the intention of settling there when the Revolution broke out. He had seen his father and brother guillotined in the last Revolution, and those who had witnessed the horrors of that time, had a vivid fear of a repetition of the scenes of forty years ago. He was delighted with the country about Fribourg, and its inhabitants, and often spoke of it to Mother Barat as a place in which she ought to found a convent. In July, 1830, he went to Giviziers with all his family, and gave a most pressing invitation to Mother Barat to come and stay with them, whilst making researches in the neighbourhood for a house, in which to establish her noviceship. The whole family were devoted

to her, and longed to have her amongst them. To the great joy of all she consented, but it was October before she arrived, as she stayed on the way at Autun, La Ferrandière, Chambéry, and Aix-les-Bains. In the meantime, Mother de Charbonnel preceded her at Giviziers, and made active search for the required house. She found one suitable in all respects, and only waited for Mother Barat's arrival to conclude the purchase.

The eldest daughter, Aymardine de Nicolay, describes the visit: "At last the long wished-for day came, and one of Mother Barat's *own* letters, such as she alone can write, brought us the great news. Nothing we could give seemed to us good enough, but we got two rooms ready, as well as we could, for her and Mother de Gramont. She looked very different from what we were accustomed to, as she was in secular dress, but her dignity, kindness, and the charm of her manner was so striking that even her religious habit, when she put it on, could not increase the respect every one felt for her. She was very lame, and my brothers vied with one another in fetching her crutches, or the stool on which she rested her foot.

"The best part of the day was the evening, when after dinner all met together in the drawing-room. Mother Barat's place was on a sofa, between Madame de Nicolay and Mother de Gramont. A little way off, near the lamp where my sisters were sitting, was Mother de Charbonnel, working at some tulle embroidery for an altar-cloth."

Amongst the frequent visitors at Giviziers at this time was Cardinal de Rohan, Archbishop of Besançon, and Mgr de Forbin-Janson, Bishop of Nancy, both exiled from their sees. The former was a cousin of the Marquis de Nicolay, but when he paid him a visit in state, he let him know that the honour was intended, not for his own relations, but for their guest, Mother Barat. His veneration for her was, however, not greater than that of Mgr de Forbin-Janson. The Abbé Perreau and many other distinguished priests were amongst the visitors, as well as Professors from the College of Fribourg, and some

laymen, amongst them Dr Recamier and the Marquis Pacca, formerly Governor of Rome. Some of these were constant guests, and when they met after dinner in the drawing-room at Giviziers, their conversation always turned on politics or theology, or the manners and customs of the country, or some other subject interesting to all. Mother Barat was the centre of attraction, and such she remained, in spite of her dexterous efforts to put forward in conversation, Mother de Gramont or Mother de Charbonnel. The charm of her conversation, and especially the charm of her sanctity, won the hearts of all. When the children were there, she always had some short and pretty story to tell, *à propos* of what was being said. The only thing that brought a shade over her face was any word of praise said of herself or of her Society. She then quickly turned the conversation. At nine o'clock exactly she withdrew with the two other Mothers.

The days passed only too quickly, and although M. de Nicolay was delighted at possessing Mother Barat, and used often to say, "This must go on for a long time," she could not continue her visit when its object was attained. A house which Mother de Charbonnel had seen at Montet, twelve miles from Fribourg (between Estavayer and Payerne), was well suited for the noviceship, except that it was too small and out of repair. It was, however, bought for the Society, and another house at Middes in its vicinity was taken for a year to be occupied until Montet was ready.

Colonies of novices arrived at Middes from Besançon and La Ferrandière at the end of October. Mothers Desmarquest and Coppens went there at once, and Mother Barat soon followed. There were some children also in the house to form a beginning for the school.

They were very poor at Middes, and the house was very small for the number of persons it contained; but Mother Barat's presence lightened all trials. She intended to remain there some months, and after the departure of Mother de Gramont for Lyons, she wrote to Mother de Rozeville: "Here I am settled upon our mountain for the winter. In

spring, like the *marmot*, I shall come out of my hole. If my foot allows it, I shall pay you a visit then, but I scarcely dare to make plans, or rather build castles in the air. We must pray and leave all to God: indeed it is all we can do." On the same day, December 8th, she wrote to Mother de Limminghe: "God will no doubt make up to us in His own good time for all we have lost. What we have to do is to grow holy. Our work is to lie hidden like the seed underground. We must put up with the winter's cold; spring will come back, and if we have sown in tears we shall reap in joy. It is a long way off now. God alone can save this small remnant of Israel. Get prayers for us."

At Middes, in the midst of the mountains, enclosure was out of the question, and the novices had long walks over the hills, and often over snow and ice, generally to visit some village church. The French were in great disfavour at that time in Switzerland, and at first the country people refused supplies of farm produce to their unwelcome visitors. For two months nearly every day saw the return of the shattered remnants of the brave Swiss guard, many of whom had given their lives for the colours they were bound to defend; and the sight of their sufferings was a fresh motive for hatred. But kindness soon overcame this prejudice as far as concerned the French inhabitants of Giviziers and Middes. There were however other anxieties. The revolution of July had excited sympathetic feelings in Switzerland. The Swiss radicals thought the time was come to press for a reform of the political constitution of the cantons, that they might inaugurate persecution of the Church, and expel the Religious Orders. One newspaper had already spread the report that Switzerland had been invaded by an army of five hundred nuns led by their Superior General, and the civil authorities took this up to make capital out of it for their own purposes. The Bishop of Fribourg, although most cordial about the foundation in his diocese, thought it more prudent that Mother Barat should go to Turin or Chambéry, and she therefore said "good-bye" to her dear "hermits of Middes." Before leaving them, however,

she had the pleasure of seeing them exchange their secular dress for the religious habit, and she herself put the white veil on the head of each of the novices.

Taking Mother Desmarquest with her, and leaving Mothers de Charbonnel and Henriette Coppens in charge at Middes, she went to Chambéry, where she arrived on Christmas Eve. On New Year's Day, 1831, she wrote to Mother Eugénie de Gramont an account of the journey, and of an accident that brought her to Chambéry much more lame than she had been on leaving Middes:

Best greetings for the New Year, and best wishes for its happiness, if it can be happy, which would indeed be a miracle. At least let us use it to lay up treasure for the life to come; our present life is worth nothing but for that. As you want to know how the accident happened, I will tell you all about it. We had crossed the lake from Vevay to St. Gingoulph, and I was sitting down there on a sofa. When I got up, to take my crutches I leant forward, to help myself by a chair which was in front of me, but at that moment some one pulled away the chair so quickly, that I had not time to recover my balance, and fell with my whole weight upon my unfortunate foot. I heard a cracking noise, and the pain was such, that I almost fainted. I had to go on however, and at Geneva I saw a surgeon who said nothing was broken, and prescribed leeches, and tried to persuade me to stay where I was. I could not do this, and came on here. . . . Now I am better, provided I keep perfectly still. I hope you will not scold me any more for I have told you every thing.

I do not complain of my little shred of suffering [she wrote on the same day to Mother Grosier]. The Sacred Heart is full of bitter pain, and it is but just that we should taste of the same cup. The only thing that costs me much is my helplessness, not being able to go where my work seems needed. *Fiat.* [And to another she said]: We must suffer to make up for the injuries every where inflicted on the Cross of Christ.

Sacrileges were indeed rife, and a week later she wrote again to Mother Emilie, who in the interval had told her of one, committed close to the convent:

Nothing grieves me like the news of the way the crucifix was treated at Niort. How was it the good people of the town had not

foreseen what was likely to happen, and removed the Calvary from danger? That broken cross, that mutilated figure go to my heart! Oh, since our Lord allowed that the left foot should fall into your garden, and that you now possess it, have it honoured by novenas of expiation and reparation. Pray a great deal for your town, and for those who committed this crime. May God convert them! Alas, what punishments are reserved for us!

It was a time of fermentation, of popular excitement directed against authority and the Church, and those, whose memory carried them back to the days of the first Revolution, could not but shudder at the likeness between some of the excesses committed now, and those of the Reign of Terror. In Paris the mob attacked and wrecked the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and the Archbishop's house. Priests were again in hiding, and public religious services were forbidden. Several of the convents of the Sacred Heart were attacked. At Perpignan the mob was unusually violent, and having sacked the seminary and the cathedral, and burnt the contents of the sacristy in the public square, rushed upon the convent. The nuns, who had spent the whole night in prayer before the tabernacle, expected a renewal of the previous scenes, when to their surprise one of the rioters, having obtained silence, cried out: "Citizens, this establishment is not the work of the Restoration, but of the Empire," and at the same time he produced a copy of the approbation granted by Napoleon I., in 1807. How he had come by it no one knew; it served its purpose in quieting the fury of the mob, but it did not prevent the removal of every thing that could be carried off, and a few days later the house had to be abandoned. At Autun, similar scenes were enacted, and the existence of the convent in Paris was always most precarious. From her bed or couch at Chambéry, Mother Barat followed all that went on, and the voluminous correspondence of these months shows how closely she watched over not only the affairs of the Society in general, but the private and personal interests of her daughters. The pain in her foot was very acute at this time; as she herself described it, it was often as if some

animal were gnawing it to the bone. Suffering often made writing impossible, but when she could write, there is nothing in the tone of her letters to show all she is going through. Her fortitude could conquer physical pain, as it could endure the far harder trial of mental suffering. "I am a miniature Job," she wrote to Mother Eugénie, in March, 1831. "Every post brings me some bad news; perhaps I shall grow accustomed to it, but it prevents me from sleeping." Yet there is all her usual courage and energy in the following lines addressed shortly afterwards to Madame de Kersaint, who with several others was setting out for America.

Go, my dear child, obedience is your sail, and our Lord Himself will steer your course. The breath of the Holy Ghost will impel onward the vessel of your heart. He will direct you, and then you will speed along the road that leads to perfection, to union with God, and to Heaven! That is the true goal of your voyage. The ocean will lie between you and all you love, and on the other shore what shall you find in exchange? The cross, privation, poverty; a climate alternately torrid and frigid, Sisters whose characters are other than your own, new customs; children hard to teach. But what shall you find besides? Ah, the Sacred Heart is there to be your rest. You will find God, but words fail to describe what this is. You will feel it at least, and like St. Francis Xavier you will exclaim: *Amplius Domine*—"Yet more, O Lord, yet more." So be it, my child, so be it!

As time went on she was able to leave her bed-room, and she spent most of the day sitting with her needlework or writing materials at a window that opened into the garden. A characteristic incident arose from this, for she made such friends with a little boy, who came every morning to serve Mass, and whom she once found stealing fruit, that he brought her one request after another, and every thing was granted him, even the breakfast set before her, on the one condition, that he should love God and not offend Him, and that Monsieur le Curé should be satisfied. As morning after morning the tray on which her breakfast was laid was taken away empty, much joy was felt at her returning appetite, but suspicions were aroused

by the fact that the breakfast tray alone showed this satisfactory appearance; and when one day the little boy was found violently shaking a branch of one of the fruit-trees, and pointed in excuse to Mother Barat's window, saying the sick Sister had given him leave to do it, the secret was discovered and an arrangement was made by which Mother Barat's charity could be satisfied, without its entailing upon her so strict a fast.

In April, Mother Barat went to Aix-les-Bains, and the day after her arrival she wrote to Mother Eugénie de Gramont:

> Angélique Lavauden brought me here. Now I am alone with Sister Annette, my faithful companion. Otherwise my solitude is complete and would be delightful, if I could go to church, and if the remembrance of my dear child, who was here with me last year, did not sadden me. Resignation sweetens these and all other troubles. To will what God wills is the only way to be at rest. So I settled myself down to spend a long month here. I have a nice room, and the corridor opens upon a pleasant garden bounded by a waterfall. Its sound is always audible, and even loud sometimes when the waters are swollen. It reminds me of the swift flight of time.

A few days later she wrote again to the same: "Send me some copies of *Think well on't*. The bathing-women treat me with astonishing interest and respect, and they would like a remembrance of this kind for their little girls. . . . Yes, my child, I should be happy to have you here with me, but as that cannot be, I prefer my solitude. The days go by, here as elsewhere, like my waterfall. I make less noise, that is all the difference. To-morrow morning I shall have myself carried to church. I shall hear Mass, and then come back to shut myself up again as usual in my peaceful retreat. No one breaks in upon it, except a few children whom I pick up here and there. The waterfall has swelled into a torrent and roars like an angry sea. It whirls along every thing that it can catch hold of. I grow giddy as I watch it, and Sister Annette holds me tight on the water's edge; but when the rains stop all this will be over. That is the moral I draw from it."

Ten days later she was back at Chambéry, and the improvement in her foot allowed her to think of a visit to

Grenoble, where the revolutionary excitement of the previous year had been much felt.

Since March, 1831, Mother Duchesne's cousin, Casimir Perier, had been Prime Minister to Louis Philippe, and his administration had in many ways remedied the existing disorder. As time went on and he showed himself able to preserve peace abroad and tranquillity at home, the friends of order rallied round his Government, and thought the future of France depended on his life and power. These hopes were but too short-lived, and his death the following year was a national sorrow.

For some time the municipal authorities at Grenoble had aimed at getting possession of the ground on which stood Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, and but for Madame de Rollin, sister of Monsieur Casimir Perier, would probably have succeeded. She had in old days been much linked with Mother Duchesne, and for her sake exerted herself to obtain a further lease of life for the convent. She had just succeeded in preserving it for nine years more, when Mother Barat, who much wished to be on the spot and judge things for herself, decided on paying it a visit.

On the 11th of June, she wrote to Mother Emilie Giraud: "I cannot in these holy days forget the child of my heart, and I shall think even more of her when at Sainte-Marie where her true life began. We have grown old since then, for that was thirty years ago. Had we been prudent and wise, what merit we might have stored up in that time. How far we might have advanced in the ways of God, in His love! Time presses, my child, for heavy and timid old age is close upon us, and if we are behindhand, it will produce only regrets. Oh, may this not be so! We can *repair*, *suffer*, *and love*. Let us make haste."

But Sainte-Marie was much changed since the old days. The school was not flourishing as in Mother Duchesne's time, and Sainte-Marie could no longer be called a "peaceful solitude." The echoes of the excitement in Grenoble were heard, even within these monastic precincts. Shouting and beating of drums began at four in the morning. Regiments

were marching here and marching there, the *Marseillaise* resounded from morning till night. The planting of the Tree of Liberty, the cries of the mob, the tumult of elections, recalled to Mother Barat's mind recollections she would have fain forgotten.

After her return to Chambéry she wrote to Mother Eugénie who had heard of her illness :

To judge by your letter, I should really think, dear Eugénie that you have had a bilious fever, as you scold me so much. It is my own fault that I fell ill, it is my own fault that I cannot work, it is my own fault if I do not come ; very soon it will be my fault if the cholera breaks out. The loser pays the costs I know, for I hope you do not doubt of my eagerness to see you ; you have repeated it often enough, now it is my fault if I do not come. What is certain is that I cannot leave before the 12th. I am still weak and the cough and fever come back at the same time every day, and what is more, I have done nothing since my return here. I have the whole house to see, and many letters to write. So patience, my dear child ; I shall stay only a short time at Middes, a short time at Besançon, and shall try to be with you early in October.

Before leaving, however, she made a retreat, in which she received the assurance that her troubles were not at an end. "Many crosses are in store for us," she wrote when it was over ; "but let us redouble our confidence, our Master has overcome the world and He will uphold us." "I live from day to day," she said again, "leaving all I have to do in God's Hands. Humanly speaking, it is far beyond my strength or my ability, thus it is our Lord's own work. I give myself up to His care."

Her confidence was rewarded. She felt her prayers were heard, and was able to write : "Things are getting on, slowly enough, to be sure, but still there is progress. God sends trial, but He sends help too. He punishes, but forgives ; and restores more than He took away. If we but knew His Heart, how we should love Him!"

The rumours of war gradually subsided, and the excitement in Switzerland quieted down. Middes, her "tottering castle," as she called it, grew firm. She arrived there before the end

September, as the time was come to transfer the noviceship to Montet. The house at Montet was beautifully situated. It lay at the foot of the lowest range of the Alps, and at the entrance of a plain quite Italian in its beauty and fertility, and hence called Italian Switzerland. Fine trees enclosed the property, and from the neighbouring heights the Lakes of Morat, Neuchatel, and Geneva are all visible, whilst the horizon is bounded by a chain of snow-capped mountains. Mother Barat went from Middes to Montet to inspect the house, and to greet her arrival the bells of the village church rang out a joyful peal. One of the country people when asked why the bells were ringing, answered it was because the *holy monk* was come. Early in October, about thirty nuns and novices removed there, from Middes, and a few children formed the school. Mother Barat was able then to leave them in security and a few days later she set off for Besançon *en route* for Paris, leaving as her parting wish, the hope "that the noviceship at Montet would become in time a model noviceship."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CHILDREN OF MARY. 1831–1832.

Of one that is so fair and bright,
Velut maris stella,
Brighter than the day is light,
Parens et puella,
I cry to thee, thou see to me,
Levedy, pray thy Son for me,
Tam pia,
That I mote come to thee,
Maria.

OLD ENGLISH. XIII. CENT.

MOTHER BARAT had left the Rue de Varenne in August, 1830, and all had been peaceful during her absence. In the course of the first winter, the precaution had been taken of establishing a temporary branch house at Versailles, but as the disturbances quieted down, those who had gone there returned to Paris, and no more alarms followed. In January, 1831, the house had been placed under the protection of the Immaculate Conception, and our Lady's care was soon manifest.

One arrangement, however, displeased Mother Barat on her return. After the sack of the Archbishop's house in Paris, Mgr de Quélen had taken refuge in the convent of St. Michael, near the Palace of the Luxembourg, but his rooms there were small and confined, and his health suffered in consequence. When Mother Eugénie de Gramont heard of this, she took upon herself to offer him part of the Hotel Biron. It was a house separate from that occupied by the nuns, and was called "le Petit-Hôtel," but the Archbishop's residence there created an irregular and dangerous position for the convent, as the new

Government looked on him as one of its most decided opponents. Mother Barat had opposed the scheme from the first, and she wrote from Montet to Mother Eugénie on October 5th, 1831: "How displeased I shall be if the *Hospitaller* (the pseudonym agreed upon in writing of the Archbishop) comes to live in the Petit-Hôtel." How compromising his presence there will be in times of excitement! It might not have mattered had he been alone, but think how many visitors he will always have. I wonder how you, usually so prudent, could have thought of such a thing.... Do your utmost to prevent it coming to pass."

However, it was too late to draw back, as the offer had been made and accepted, and all that remained was to obviate the disadvantages by redoubled vigilance. For nine years to come, precautionary measures on this point were the subject of numerous letters from Mother Barat. She could not stay long in Paris in the autumn of 1831, and left in November, to visit other houses. Her absence was to last for two years, but that could hardly have been foreseen at first. It seemed as if the pressing and increasing evils of the day only called forth more of the fund of energy and zeal that was the foundation of her character, and before she left Paris, she sent a circular letter to her convents, urging all to fresh and greater efforts.

More than ever it behoves us [she wrote] to say with the Apostle: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. The charity of Jesus Christ urgeth us." The times urge us also. You know something of the horrors of the unprecedented and monstrous wickedness that exists in our unhappy country. Bad men hate us, and our very name excites their rage. Let us oppose them by prayer and the most perfect virtues. Above all, may zeal for souls be rekindled amongst us. Satan's agents are earnest and persevering, let us be equally so in saving souls whom they seek to ruin, and may the hate of the wicked be met by us with a love of like intensity. Let us inspire the children entrusted to us, whether rich or poor, with a lively faith, extreme horror of sin, fear of God's judgments, and inviolable attachment to His holy Church. Let us engrave deeply on their hearts the awful truths of religion. Tempests await them, and their faith must be founded on a rock.

A foundation was made at Annonay just at this time, by incorporating into the Society an association dating from the beginning of the century. Its foundress, as soon as she heard of the Society of the Sacred Heart, recognized it as that of which many supernatural intimations had been given to her. She wished to join with her fourteen companions, and Mother Prevost was sent to effect the union. "I found them, one and all," she wrote to Mother Barat, "equally happy at being received. They made no conditions, and accepted every thing. Their devotedness, cordial charity, and simplicity are the fruit of the spirit of faith, native to these mountains, which were watered by the sweat of St. Francis Regis. When I returned to La Ferrandière after talking to them, I struck my breast, as St. Anthony did on leaving Paul in the desert, and said — far more justly than he — 'Unhappy that I am, I have not yet begun to be a religious!'"

The first town at which Mother Barat stopped was Orleans, and the second was Tours. In both places, she was begged to make foundations, but in neither did she judge the time was yet come. Lyons was the next place at which she intended to stay, but on the way thither at Chateauroux, a third fall on her infirm foot seemed likely to make further travelling impossible. "I paid little or no attention to it at first," she wrote, "although the pain was very great. I sometimes think it must be the devil who pushes me about in this way, and causes these falls. That only proves that I have no power over him. Pray that I may get the better of him for myself and others."

However, she pressed on, but, at the gates of Lyons, learnt that riots and insurrection had broken out there, and she was advised to stay at Tarare until the city was quiet. Two days later, she wrote to Mother Eugénie, from Lyons: "I arrived a few hours ago, with no difficulty whatever. The riots are at an end, but it is the July heroes over again. I found here our Mothers Deshayes, Lavauden, and others. They little thought what a reception they would have, cannon firing, tocsin pealing, and all the usual accompaniments. They will go back to their various houses when they have had a talk with me. . . . My

knee is better, the rest at Tarare did it good, but what a trial that delay was! What anxiety about Lyons, about Paris, about so much that is dear to me! I must leave every thing in God's Hands, but I am very loath to be going further off under such circumstances."

Her next letter to Mother Eugénie was from La Ferrandière, and was dated November 27th :

The newspapers will have reassured you about us, my child. All is quiet, especially out here. What tries me most at present is my uncertainty as to when I shall leave. I am told it would be very imprudent for me to travel until I have recovered the effects of my fall, and perhaps it is true. Two or three weeks' rest is said to be necessary, but I doubt whether I could go on to Rome then, and in that case how much I should regret having left you so soon. Yet I prayed so much that I might know God's will by some clear sign that I am reassured about the accident which keeps me back, and which will have no further consequences. I shall busy myself about several matters concerning Bordeaux and Avignon, and if, when I am better, it is too late for Rome, I shall visit the houses in the south of France.

Ten days later she added :

In our uncertainty, I have referred the matter of my journey to Father Rozaven. If he advises me to start, I shall set off whatever is said against it ; otherwise I shall stay here. I say nothing of my sacrifice at being kept away from you without a reason for it. You understand my meaning. There is always a reason for what is God's will. His thoughts are not as ours, and I feel the truth of this now. We must say, *Fiat*. I should so much have liked to spend all the Christmas feasts with you. There I am again ! How wanting I am in generosity, whilst you have so much.

Father Rozaven's opinion was that it was too late in the year for the Roman journey, and Mother Barat then returned to Lyons from La Ferrandière. The excitement caused by the insurrection had set afloat innumerable false prophecies, predicting fresh and even worse disasters. "What a century of imagination ours is!" Mother Barat wrote to Mother de Gramont. "If I had time to repeat to you all the pious

absurdities in circulation you would smile with pity. . . . They are very ridiculous, so I do not trouble myself about them, and am staying on in spite of many entreaties to go." Another day she said: "The prophecies foretell troubles. As usual they have deceived the credulous, but not your Mother, who sticks to her *Credo*. I think it is the wisest plan."

The providential reason for Mother Barat's stay in Lyons soon showed itself, for it led to the institution of the Congregation of the Children of Mary of the Sacred Heart, a work very near Mother Barat's heart at that time. By establishing the noviceship in Switzerland she had provided for the immediate future of the Society, but she longed to do something more than she had done hitherto towards securing a higher tone amongst ladies living in the world. A passage in a letter written in July, 1831, to Mother de Rozeville, is remarkable. "How rare it is to meet with a valiant woman. It must be so, because Holy Writ says: 'Far, and from the uttermost coasts, is the price of her.' And then what praises follow! Let us labour then to form some at any cost. They will form others, and good will come of it. In this age of ours we must not count on men for keeping faith alive, its seed is hidden in the weaker sex. *O Altitudo!* How different are God's thoughts from ours, but He is almighty."

The mistress of the school in the Rue Boissac, Mother Edmée Lhuillier, niece of Father Druilhet, was a person of remarkable influence, and she had, some time since, established an association composed originally of former pupils of the Sacred Heart, but joined afterwards by other ladies of Lyons. The work was quite in its infancy, and still comparatively unformed, but Mother Barat saw what it might lead to, and she resolved to develop it. She applied to Father Druilhet for rules, and he drew up those by which the Congregation of the Children of Mary, as it is called, is still governed. When the rules were laid down, Mother Barat placed the association under the patronage of the Archbishop of Lyons, who named one of his Vicars General to undertake its direction. A little later she obtained for it the authorization of Rome, and

constituted it on a like basis for all the houses of the Society. On the 25th of March, 1832, the Congregation was definitively established in Lyons by the choice of those who held the offices of President, Secretary, Treasurer, &c. Mother Barat, in her answer to the letter which notified to her the results of these elections, says: "I am delighted at the thought of all the good this work will do, and rejoiced that Lyons should be its birthplace. . . . Your mission is a very high one, and I do not fear to call it an apostolate, for you are to act as apostles in the midst of a perverse world. You must lead into the right path those who are wandering from it, encourage those kept back by human respect, and stop the downward course of those in danger."

Another work to complete that of the Children of Mary, was the institution of retreats for ladies living in the world, and Mother Barat lost no time in taking it up. It had been begun at Turin by Mother de Limminghe, to whom Mother Barat wrote on the subject early in 1832.

I have long wished to see these retreats set on foot. The idea comes from God, and I am sure He will bless the work. There is no doubt it is the very best way of doing good in the upper classes of society. Make every sacrifice to set it going, and do not be uneasy if enclosure suffers somewhat. I will arrange it all with you, for the time is come to forget ourselves, to put self aside, and suffer any thing and every thing to procure God's glory. We should not fear the inconvenience these retreats bring with them, for one week in the year, and I should like to see them an established custom in all our houses. Such trouble is taken everywhere to lead souls to ruin; we should at least work equally hard to save them.

This wish was soon realized, and it would be hard to say whether any other of Mother Barat's works has produced, and is producing, more good.

On the 12th of February, 1832, Mother Barat went to Avignon, and she learnt there the dreaded, but long expected news that the cholera had reached the capital.

"Paris is now a city of the dead," Mother Barat wrote during Holy Week, 1832. "The Lamentations of Jeremias

have never been more appropriate than in these sad days, If only Jerusalem would be converted! No doubt a great many sinners return to God, but they are private people, not those in power. Let us pray for them. France will be saved only by humility and prayer, but of these we have so little."

Early in April, Louis Philippe went with his Prime Minister to visit the cholera hospital, and spent some time in inspecting the wards. On returning home, Casimir Perier was attacked by the disease, but his death did not take place for six weeks, a very unusual length of time in cholera. In the first week of May, whilst he was still between life and death, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Duchesne: "One calamity, dear Philippine, succeeds another. Your cousin, Casimir, will not recover. He was our hope, for he had at any rate a good head." Amongst his last words were these: "Return to the Church, or you are lost."

It was a time of intense anxiety for Mother Barat. The cholera was at Lille, Besançon, Beauvais, and Amiens, and she foresaw that it would spread to all the large towns. She scarcely ventured to read her letters, for fear of the news they would bring. She sent in all directions the prescriptions and treatment found most efficacious by the best physicians in Paris, but her hope was above all in prayer. She entrusted the houses of her Society to Our Lady of Sorrows, and urged children and religious to redouble their fervour.

In these terrible days Mgr de Quélen showed himself a true pastor of his hitherto ungrateful flock. He left his concealment, and at the head of his clergy visited the part of Paris where the epidemic was most violent. He organized ambulances, provided for the wants, temporal as well as spiritual, of the sufferers, and made himself responsible for the destitute orphans in his diocese, whose number was daily increased by hundreds. To his priests he wrote: "I know no other politics than those of St. Vincent de Paul. Like him, I am for God and the poor," and in the Pastoral Letter in which he announced that he would be a father to the fatherless, he applied to himself the words of Joseph to his

brethren, and addressing his flock said: "I am Joseph your brother . . . be not afraid. Not by your counsel was I sent into Egypt, but by the will of God, that you may be preserved upon the earth, and may have food to live." (Gen. xlv.) Mother Barat was delighted with the spirit shown by the words and actions of the Archbishop, and she longed to imitate him as far as she could. She wrote to Mother Eugénie de Gramont from Avignon, on April 29th:

This morning, my child, a thought came to me during my thanksgiving after Communion. You will welcome it and take to it, if it is from God; if you do not like it, I shall think of it no more. For a long time past, I have been wishing to have in Paris from twelve to twenty orphan girls, whom we could educate, and train for service, but I gave up the idea for lack of room. When I was reading the Archbishop's Pastoral, I asked myself if it would not be well for us to take in at the Rue de Varenne, twelve or fifteen little girls whose parents have died of cholera. . . . It would be difficult work at first, but when once they had learnt to submit to discipline, they would not be troublesome. It is for you to decide; your Mother is only advising, helping, and praying for her child.

The next day she wrote again: "I have been dreaming of our orphans. How pleased I shall be if you can adopt them. I think we should all be protected by them. This work would keep us safe." Mother de Gramont was delighted with the idea, and soon twelve destitute little girls were received. The orphanage was opened on the feast of the Sacred Heart. This act was one of thanksgiving for the past, and at the same time of supplication for the future. St. Francis of Sales says: "God will take care of the children of those who have taken care of the children of God," and these words were once more verified in Mother Barat's case.

Paris was full of dead and dying, but none were attacked by cholera at the convent of the Sacred Heart, though it was the only house in that quarter of the city that escaped. The same protection was extended to the other convents in the provincial towns. In the same letter to Mother Eugénie in which she proposed adopting the orphans, Mother Barat expressed some

of her anxiety as well as her gratitude: "May our Lord keep you all! I ought to think only of thanking Him. It is a great sorrow to me to be so far off in this calamitous time, but suffering is my due. Perhaps if I had been with you, you would not have been spared. Is my poor Stanislaus [her nephew] still alive? His silence, and yours about him, make me very anxious. His mother would die of grief if she lost him, and what would become of his sister? However, we must leave all to God. This is all we can say. It always comes to this. We richly deserve this scourge, and can only bow our heads and humble ourselves. *Quia peccavimus.*"

Mother Barat continued her visits to the houses in the south of France, and from Avignon went on to Perpignan. Although revolutionary violence had driven the nuns from their convent, they were still in the neighbourhood. At first they had found refuge in private houses and this had led to their being better known and appreciated. At the time of Mother Barat's visit, they were once more all together in a little house of the town, and they had twenty pupils. She was implored not to recall them, lest, once gone, they should never come back again. She left them where they were, encouraging them by the hope that brighter days were in store.

Her next expedition was to Aix, where she was earnestly entreated to take charge of a school till then in secular hands. The offer was not an attractive one, for there was a heavy debt on the establishment, and the children, though very good-hearted, had been very badly trained. Mother Barat had decided on refusing, and in order to avoid importunities had arranged to leave the house when all were at Mass in the chapel. However, she reckoned without the children, whose hearts she had as usual completely won. A rumour had got abroad that things were not favourable to their wishes, and as soon as they heard the sound of carriage wheels, they left the chapel in a body and beset her passage with tearful entreaties: "We want to belong to the Sacred Heart. You must not go; you must be our Mother." Mother Barat tried to hold her own, but she had no heart to resist the entreaties and still more

the tears of children, and she promised it should be as they wished. She liked the ardour of these southern natures, and hoped much good from them. A few weeks later she returned to Aix to fulfil her promise, and the joy of all was very great. Yet a difficult task was before her, for she had to bring hitherto untamed natures under the yoke of discipline, and it required all her tact to accomplish the work. She spent some weeks amongst them, and they learnt to love her so much that they could refuse her nothing.

One custom, however, she had to put off asking them to sacrifice, so much did they cling to the practice, undesirable as it was. Each child had a cupboard of which she kept the key, and in which she was allowed to put away whatever she might fancy. Of course the right of proprietorship which this involved was pleasant—scarcely less so than the fruits, cakes, &c., always accessible. One day, Mgr de Forbin-Janson, Bishop of Nancy, came to see Mother Barat. She took him to the garden, assembled the school, and dexterously leading the conversation in the right direction, gave high praises to the excellent qualities of her Provençal children. "You shall see for yourself, my lord, there is no exaggeration in what I say. They are so good that they give me directly whatever I ask for. Is it not true, children?" There was a unanimous and very hearty: "Yes," and Mother Barat went on: "It is a great sacrifice I am going to ask you for. Perhaps I have said too much." "Oh no," all exclaimed, "tell us what it is." Then she began to tell the whole story of the cupboards, making it as amusing, as *piquant* as possible—and her stories had an inimitable charm. When she had finished, she turned to her young audience and said: "Well, dear children, will you make over this proprietorship, and lay your keys at his lordship's feet?" She had scarcely finished speaking when the girls had disappeared, and came back with their keys, which they gave up in testimony of the truth of the praises they loved to hear. The school grew and prospered, and most of the children turned out very well, so that Mother Barat never regretted having accepted the foundation.

On May 8th, 1832, she wrote to Mother de Rozeville: "How touched I was at the account you gave me of the way the people at Amiens are turning to God. . . . Here faith still lives in the hearts of the inhabitants, and as they have not allowed their crosses to be knocked down, they hope that God will protect them. It was a consolation to see the honour paid to beautiful mission crosses in the towns between Marseilles and Avignon; I shall not be surprised if our Lord and His Blessed Mother keep them safe." The climate of the south of France had restored Mother Barat's strength, but her foot was still lame. and no remedies availed to cure the injury. Mother de Limminghe, who had come from Turin to Aix, used all her influence to induce Mother Barat to return with her to Turin, and she succeeded in her endeavours. On May 20th, 1832, Mother Barat left Aix for Italy, and Mother de Charbonnel was entrusted with the task of establishing the house at Aix, clearing off debts and providing for all its needs.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ROME. 1832.

Think not the living times forget
Ages of heroes fought and fell,
That Homer in the end might tell.
O'er grovelling generations past,
Uprose the Gothic fane at last,
And countless hearts in countless years
Had wasted thoughts and hopes and fears,
Ere England Shakespeare saw, or Rome
The pure perfection of her dome.

MOTHER BARAT and Mother de Limminghe were travelling on their way to Turin, and had reached the French frontier, the bridge over the Var, near Nice, when suddenly their carriage was surrounded, and their further progress stopped. An animated conversation was carried on around them; some affirmed and others denied the truth of a statement with regard to Mother de Limminghe, who at last was forced to accompany an official to the guard-house. Here, to her great surprise, she was put under arrest. She was taken for the Duchesse de Berri, who was known to have landed on the coasts of France, and orders to prevent her from leaving the country had been issued at all the frontier towns. Mother de Limminghe produced her passport, but this did not satisfy the authorities, as some informality was discovered which confirmed their suspicions. A messenger was sent express to Turin, but to await his return involved a wearisome delay. Happily, the travellers had not to do this, for about midnight, Mother Barat's tact had convinced the official of his mistake, and they were free to continue their journey. Their way to Turin lay over

the Col di Tenda, a precipitous road, still covered with snow, and on the French side just open for horses. On the Italian side only sledge travelling was possible, and at the head of the pass the carriage, in which Mother Barat alone remained, was unhung, laid on a sledge, and dragged down over the snow by twenty men, at a terrific pace. To the others, walking seemed preferable, though they were knee-deep in snow. A frightful storm burst over them just as they reached the valley. "God and our good angels protected us, and we arrived here safe and sound," Mother Barat wrote from Turin, on May 28th.

This was her first visit to Turin, and, indeed, the first time she had been in Italy. The convent of the *Crucifix* was full of recollections of Mother Bigeu, who had founded it about ten years before, and it was now prospering under Mother de Limminghe. The high patronage under which it was placed, the frequent visits of the Queen and her ladies, had not made life there less simple than in the other houses of the Society. The children were full of faith and piety and had a great love for Mother Barat. When they heard that she would stay some time in the house, and that a treatment to cure her lameness would be tried, they resolved to obtain by prayer what human means had been unavailing to effect. Early in June, a novena was begun to Our Lady of Sorrows. They would have wished to set aside the help of surgical skill, and trust in prayer alone, but Mother de Limminghe feared that this would be presumption, and she called in Chevalier Rossi, whose reputation as Court surgeon was very high, and who was moreover an excellent Catholic.

On June 1st, Mother Barat wrote to Mother de Gramont: "I have some hope that I shall be let off returning to Aix-les-Bains, where I am so out of place. They have consulted a clever surgeon, who finds that there is a dislocation in the bones of the foot of the width of a finger and a half." The doctor at first feared that the injury was irremediable, and prayers were then redoubled. About the middle of June, he attempted to operate on the foot. By one skilful touch, he reset he bones, and then a course of douches completed the cure.

Mother Barat wrote, on June 17th, to Mother Emilie Giraud: "Thank God, I am free of Aix-les-Bains. . . . The doctor has put back into its place the bone that was out of joint, and I can walk again, not well indeed, but I *can walk*. The muscles must now be strengthened by douches, which will keep me here the time I should have spent in Savoy. Thank our Lord and the Blessed Virgin. They work so many miracles in this country where faith still reigns in all its purity, and I may add, in this house, where our Lady is so much loved. How she does protect it! This is shown by the fervour of all and the graces she bestows on the community."

The doctor gave an attestation of this cure, declaring that he had only been the instrument of God's power, that it was no work of his. The joy of all was very great when they saw Mother Barat without her crutches, to which she was not again obliged to have recourse.

All this time the state of France was never far from Mother Barat's thoughts. On June 13th, she wrote to Mother Eugénie de Gramont:

Your last letter made me very uneasy, however I hoped that God would protect you as He always does. We are so accustomed to His merciful goodness that confidence always comes uppermost, even when the dangers are widespread. Let us go on praying and hoping, for He Himself bids us do so. I fear your troubles are not over. Our nation only calms down for a short time; exasperation soon begins again on the slightest pretext. Happily, life goes on in spite of all these troubles, and we shall come to the end of it at last. Then eternal rest begins, and we shall rejoice at having suffered. Life is so short; why make it shorter still, and increase its misery by bringing on so many evils? Let us pray for these troubled spirits that they may desire peace and that which brings peace, the Christian virtues from which they are so far removed.

On July 2nd, she wrote to Mother Henriette Grosier:

This house is really beloved by the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He blesses it on account of its fervour and fidelity. Order and peace are so perfect that there is nothing for me to do but look on and be edified, and I shall make use of my stay here for my retreat. I shall begin on July 15th (the feast of St. Henry), and my first prayer that day will

be for my Henriette; she will do the same for me on the 22nd. I shall enjoy spending that day in a *Sainte-Baume*. There could not be a more complete solitude than this beautiful place, where our nuns and children spend the summer months. Beautiful as it is, its chief charm is the peace that pervades it. People are so religious here. The spirit of faith makes parents allow their children to consecrate themselves to God. There were obstacles and prejudices to overcome, but the Institute is better known since a retreat was given for ladies of the world, and there are a fair number of vocations.

It was at the altar of our Blessed Lady at this *Casino*, or Villa, that Mother Barat put up an *ex voto* in thanksgiving for her cure, and it was here that she made her retreat, in a "delicious solitude," as she called it, amongst stately trees, and with nothing from without to distract her but the singing of the nightingales. When it was over she wrote again to Mother Henriette Grosier, on August 15th. "I have made many discoveries during my retreat of fresh deficiences and necessities in my soul. Who could bear the searching eye of God, if its keenness were not veiled by His mercy." But holy fear did but lead to deeper love as we are shown by a letter written a few days later to Mother Emilie Giraud:

We suffer, my Emilie; that is our consolation [she wrote]. What higher proof of love can God give us than the gift of suffering? I envy those who are really "valiant women," and act only from pure love. We are more than foolish if we want any thing but God alone and His Cross. Nothing but this can lead us into the depths of the Sacred Heart, and where else can we find peace and rest? Nowhere; it is a fatal mistake to suppose it; but, alas, how few surrender themselves wholly to God's guidance, although it costs less in reality than half-measures. Instead of swimming against the stream, which is hard and dangerous work, let us trust ourselves to it. Once in the current, the Holy Ghost will speed our course, and we shall reach port more surely.

The rapid flight of time, always so prominent a thought in her mind, was brought before her just now by the deaths of two of her early novices at Poitiers, Mothers de Chastaignier and Lydia Chobelet, the latter, as she said, "one of the most beautiful and humble souls she had ever met." The sorrow

for these losses was heightened by another, that of Mother Louise Varax, who took up the burden of the Paris school when ill-health obliged Mother de Gramont to leave it for awhile during the stormy days of the summer of 1830. "I have been living and thinking for more than fifty years," Mother Barat wrote, "and this half-century has vanished like a dream. What remains will go as quickly. Is it worth while to care a great deal about the inn, where we are to stay so short a time, instead of making ready a lovely and lasting home, even at the cost of present sacrifices?"

To her nephew Stanislaus, she wrote about this time: "Those in power are blinded. God, and God alone, can save us. If only they would pray to Him, if they would own their need of Him! But, alas, no. Pride is our mainstay in this century. What an awakening is in store for these wise people, who are such only in their own conceit! Their wisdom is only folly, for it is folly to set aside Him who has created us, and who holds our destiny in His Hands. Take your stand amongst the small number of the truly wise. Fear and love above all things Him from whom we look for our eternal happiness. The world is too full of misery for it to win our love."

Pride, with all its power of blinding the soul, with all its suggestions of independence, and its constant and untiring efforts to replace God by self, was the enemy against which Mother Barat had fought from the early days in Paris, when she had resolved to revenge herself for the prospect of never becoming a great saint by being "at least very humble." Her whole life since then had seen the consistent carrying out of that resolution, and now when half-way through the career of work, that had begun for her with the foundation of the Society, she was inspired to take another great step towards the heroic exercise of her favourite virtue. The idea had been for some months in her mind, when at last she wrote of it to Mother de Limminghe from Avignon, in May, 1832, at first in her playful tone, and afterwards more seriously: "Beware," she said, "of what I have in store for you, for it will be no light weight. However, virtue will alleviate the trial. I smile

at the thought of it, so do not be afraid; put it out of your thoughts; it must be a secret between us."

But the time had now come to disclose this secret. Mother Barat, in whose eyes obedience was, as she said, "a well-spring of holiness, the surest proof of love, and the truest and safest link for uniting the soul with our Lord," wished to practise it as all her daughters did, by dependence, not only on the Rule, but on the living voice of authority. She wished to place herself in a state of dependence on the word of one amongst them, and she chose Mother de Limminghe to guide her personal conduct both exterior and interior.

We have no record of the resistance with which Mother de Limminghe must have at first opposed this unexpected responsibility, but whatever it was, it yielded to the will of Mother Barat, supported as this was by the advice of Father Renault, whom the latter had won to her cause. He persuaded Mother de Limminghe that it was her duty to accept, that in accepting she lightened Mother Barat's burden and increased her happpiness by making it possible for her to obey, and that she could moreover use her authority to lessen Mother Barat's austerities and watch over her health. It was agreed therefore that in what regarded her private conduct, Mother Barat would do nothing except with leave from Mother de Limminghe. "When you are not there, and I am in doubt," she wrote some time afterwards, "I consult you in spirit, and do what I think you would advise. I do all that you wish as to prayer, rest, and other things. I try to eat and sleep, and succeed reasonably, so you must be satisfied."

That her obedience might be continual, Mother Barat had privately resolved to make Mother de Limminghe the companion of her journeys, as often as possible. But it must not be supposed for a moment that her friendship made her blind or partial. She told Mother de Limminghe plainly of any fault she noticed in her, and admonitions of this kind were received with gratitude and submission. It was a friendship based on their common love for humiliation and sacrifice, and a common thirst after perfection.

An instance of Mother Barat's discernment has remained on record, that belongs to the time of this visit to Turin. A parish-priest of the neighbourhood sent to the convent a girl who was commonly supposed to be the subject of extraordinary supernatural communications and favours. Our Lady was said to have appeared to her, and to have ordered her to build a church upon a hill, and as a proof of her mission, she was believed neither to eat nor sleep. Mother Barat received her very kindly. Her appearance was prepossessing; her eyes were always modestly cast down, but Mother Barat had not watched her long before she noticed that her "speech was not quite so well guarded as her sight." A week's stay in the convent completely proved that she not only eat but drank, and so the imposture was unmasked, yet the *soi-disant* visionary had friends who still upheld her character for sanctity. "Such is the craving some people have for what is out of the common," was Mother Barat's comment on the story, and she added when writing to Mother de Gramont: "Really it comes to this. I shall only believe in revelations when you have any, so let me know at once. Just now I am more incredulous than ever, and that is saying a great deal."

At last the time came for her to leave Turin for Rome, and she announced this to the Society by a circular letter dated August 31st. After thanking for the prayers said for her cure, and begging a continuance of them that she might make good use of her restored health, she spoke of the journey before her, and said that in the Lent following she would name a place for the assembling of the next General Congregation. She made known the arrangements by which the work of the Society was to be carried on during her absence, and noted the weak points to be strengthened, the faults to be corrected, the reforms to be undertaken.

I will not conclude [she continues], without beseeching of the fervent not to relax their efforts, but to advance with ever greater zeal towards the goal, forgetting, as the Apostle says, the things that are behind. How can we, living in times of such calamity, think of any thing but appeasing the wrath of the outraged Lamb of God, and

making reparation to the Sacred Heart for the sorrows by which It is surrounded? Do not let us, whom He has loaded with His benefits, be amongst those faithless spouses, of whom He complained to one of His beloved servants. Can we ever forget that till now we have been preserved, almost miraculously, from the terrible scourge that has spared neither age, nor sex, nor station? How ungrateful if we did not in return do our utmost by the most inviolable fidelity. We must not hide it from ourselves: our troubles are not over. Let us prepare for what is coming by prayer, and if possible stay God's Hand by the holiness of our lives and our ardent love of our Lord. We shall thus win the graces we need to reach the perfection of our sublime vocation, and we shall attain its double end, our own sanctification and that of the souls entrusted to our care.

Cured though she was, it was not easy for Mother Barat to leave Turin. Her recovery, wrought amongst them and in answer to their prayers, had, in their own eyes, given to all there a kind of right of possession over her, and the children's affection was doubled by her indulgent kindness. A story is told of one of the young mistresses having complained to her of the behaviour in church of two little culprits, about four years old; she only laughed, and begged that next Sunday they might be put on low stools in front of her stall. The children were delighted at this distinction, and showed their joy by a thousand little pranks, until their mistress was on the point of taking them away. When she told this afterwards to Mother Barat, "Why should you?" she answered. "These two babies were like little lambs frisking before the Lord. May He long keep them in their sweet innocence! Oh! if God were as severe with us, how often he would turn us out of His sacred presence!"

October was half over before Mother Barat and Mother de Limminghe set out for Rome. They stopped at Loretto, and received Holy Communion, but the visit was all too short for Mother Barat's fervour. "One would want to spend months in the *Santa Casa*, instead of hours," she wrote. They stopped also at Parma, where the Archduchess Marie Louise, once Empress of the French, wanted a foundation, but any decision was postponed until later. On October 25th, they were in Rome.

As Mother Barat said herself, the sight of Rome awoke in her mind a thousand thoughts. "In my youth," she wrote to one of her nephews, "my whole being would have been stirred at the recollections Rome calls forth. Every thing passes away; Rome itself is the best proof of this. There are ruins on all sides, and the nothingness of earthly things is nowhere more apparent. God alone is great and unchanging, and I say this with more force and conviction here than elsewhere."

For a few days after her arrival, an injury to her foot prevented her from coming downstairs, and one morning, with only a few minutes' notice, she was told that the Holy Father was in the convent, and was coming to give her his blessing. As soon as she saw him, she tried to kneel, but he would not allow it, and made her sit beside him. "I could never describe what I felt," she wrote afterwards, "when I saw that venerable Pontiff come into the little room adjoining my cell. I could not control my emotion. However, it was all pleasurable, for his words were kindness itself." "How young she is!" was the exclamation that escaped the lips of Gregory XVI. on his first sight of Mother Barat, and he went on to speak to her with great interest of her Society, the prosperity of which he assured her he had much at heart, because it was so useful, gave so much edification, and was so *well governed*. The last words were strongly accentuated. This praise was all the more remarkable because, as Cardinal Capellari, and a member of the Commission to examine the Statutes, he had not granted more than a simple Laudatory Brief. Now, from the watch-tower of the Church, he saw the special place occupied by the Society of the Sacred Heart in the plan of Providence. He said one day in conversation with Father Massa: "The monastic education I have received would certainly make me withhold my approval of many things about this Society. But its Rule is the work of God, and I would not change a word of it. The finger of God is there."

The Superior General shared with her Institute the high esteem of the Holy Father. "You are quite right to come to Rome," he said to her; "all the Generals of Religious Orders

are there." Lest these last words should be taken to mean that it was his wish that her residence should be fixed in Rome, Mother Barat took care to relieve the French houses from anxiety on that head. "It is understood here," she said, "that it would be disadvantageous to us, at least now; and all my friends agree that I must go back in the spring."

When the Marchesa Andosilla said to Gregory XVI., on another occasion, that she would like to keep Mother Barat in Rome by a golden chain: "Superiors General are not to be chained," was his reply.

The primary object of her visit to Rome was the establishment of a novitiate. A few novices were, it is true, already at the Trinità, under the care of Mother Desmarquest, but as that house was to be exclusively French, it was necessary to found another, if the Society was to spread amongst the families of Rome and Italy. The old convent of Santa Rufina, in the Trastevere, had, thanks to the generosity of the Marchesa Andosilla and the protection of Gregory XVI., been made over to the Society for this purpose, and the novices were to take possession when Mother Barat had arrived. One of the conditions on which the convent had been given to the Society was that it should provide for the maintenance of the few remaining Oblate nuns to whom it had belonged. Part of the house was to be reserved for them, and they were to be boarded as well as lodged. "They are really very good," Mother Barat wrote of them, "and the Superior seems to me to be a saint. How much their Congregation has done, how many children it has taught here during the two hundred years of its existence! It is very sad to see them dying out. What more, alas, have we done than they, that God preserves us, and that he should protect us in so special a manner."

The other conditions attached to the possession of Santa Rufina, and the chief one in the mind of the Holy Father, was to provide for the education of the children of the Trasteverini, a work both difficult and important, for they boast of being the descendants of the ancient Romans, which gives an unusual independence to their character and proceedings. Some authors

affirm that it was in this part of the city that St. Peter began his preaching, and that here the foundations of the Church in Rome were laid. The Trasteverini are remarkable for their faith, their enthusiastic love of our Lady, and their fidelity and loyalty to the Holy See, but they were sunk in poverty and ignorance. As soon as Mother Barat could walk, she went to inspect the house, and wrote on November 16th, to Mother de Gramont, the result of her visit: "At last I have been to see our future convent. It has been put into good repair, and I found it nicer than I had been led to expect. There is a large courtyard with a fountain, and we shall make a little garden in course of time. It is destined for a poor school later on, and perhaps a middle class school also, for if the noviceship increases with God's blessing, it will be removed elsewhere."

A few days later, she wrote again: "Yesterday, I began my pilgrimages by a visit to St. Peter's; the thought of you followed me there, and will go with me everywhere. I will send you an account of it, as I know that all my *faits et gestes* interest you." She visited all the great sanctuaries and Basilicas of Rome, and the places consecrated by the blood of martyrs, with such faith and love as a heart like hers alone is capable of.

She had two audiences of Pope Gregory XVI., and she also saw him on Maundy Thursday, washing the feet of twelve poor men. She afterwards described the scene:

I was in a tribune [she says], with some ladies whom I did not know. On the wall opposite to us was a great picture representing our Lord washing the feet of His Apostles, whilst, in the chapel below, His Vicar was renewing, at the feet of twelve poor men, this mystery of humility. I said to a lady who was beside me: "How plain, how tangible this makes the perpetuity of the Catholic Church. What unbeliever, heretic, or schismatic could withstand the sight of the beautiful chain that unites our Lord and His representative now on earth?" The lady I spoke to seemed astonished at my exclamation, and her only answer was to ask me to pray for her. I learnt afterwards that she was a schismatic, and, later on, heard with great joy that she had become a Catholic.

Mother Barat assisted at the Holy Father's Mass on Easter Day, and at the blessing given *Urbi et Orbi* in the *piazza* of St. Peter's to forty thousand persons. But to be one of a crowd, or indeed to be out of convent walls, was never to her taste, and she was glad when all the sight-seeing—be it what it might—was over. When marks of honour met her from without, her thoughts turned with envy to the *Sepolte vive*, for she loved nothing so well as solitude. Her retirement was however often invaded, for Rome was full of French families whom recent events or fear of the cholera had driven from their country, and they all sought her out: as did many old friends of the Society, Mgr Frayssinous, Abbé Trebuquet, Fathers Druilhet and Loriquet. Many Cardinals were also amongst her visitors. It was often a very purgatory for herself, but great good was done, as there was but one opinion amongst all her visitors as to her gifts, both natural and supernatural.

There was one old friend of hers in Rome whom it was unmixed pleasure to her to see again, and to whom Mother Barat's visit to Rome was an intense delight. This was Madame Louise Naudet, who had been an instrument in God's Hands for untold good, when long ago at Amiens she had fixed upon Sister Sophie as best fitted to take charge of the little community at the Rue Neuve, and had exhorted her to so much effect "to come out of herself." Thirty years had passed since then, and had left their stamp on both, but Madame Naudet forgot the flight of time in her joy at seeing Mother Barat once more. She was still in her eyes the little Sister Sophie of old times, and the names of familiar endearment, by which she addressed her, took away the breath of those present at the interview. Mother Barat only laughed, and said of Madame Naudet, "It was she all over; she was herself and no one else!" Madame Baudemont was also in Rome; Mother Barat saw her more than once, and showed her the utmost kindness. She and Madame Copina lived together in the convent of St. Denis, but they were not allowed to receive novices, and supported themselves by teaching. They had a school of about thirty children, whom they presented to

Mother Barat when she went to see them. Monsieur de Saint-Estève had broken off all intercourse with their house, and no longer took any interest in their work. "They have a suffering life," Mother Barat wrote, "but bear their trials bravely. I wished to see them, and assure them that the past had left no ill-feeling on my part."

On the 27th of December, eleven Italian postulants received the habit. They were very fervent and had profited to the utmost by the care of one, herself a novice, who a few months previously had come from Middes, Adèle Lehon, afterwards Superior General of the Society. Mother Barat wrote about them: "Nothing can check their fervour, the only difficulty is to keep it within bounds." She goes on to tell how one of them, having fallen down and broken her leg, did not cry out, but waited for help until some one came that way, and bore, with a smile upon her lips, all the pain that followed. And she adds: "I am no longer surprised that Italy should have produced so many saints."

Most of these novices did not know French, and Mother Barat took up again the study of Italian, partly in order to be able to talk to them, and to understand them more easily. She read many good authors, and took a lesson every day from one of her daughters. If in her reading she met with an interesting story, she often repeated it at recreation, with other anecdotes, of which her supply was inexhaustible. A record of these recreations remains to us, from notes taken at the time. The paper and ink are now yellow with age, but each of its two hundred pages is eloquent of the love and veneration with which every word she spoke was listened to and treasured.

On the evening of the day when the new novices had received the habit, she called them all to her and told them how the whole Society rejoiced with them in their joy, how they were the subject of much hope. "The sight of trees laden with fruit is pleasant," she said, "but not less pleasant is the sight of one that is white with blossom in spring. The thicker the blossom, the greater the promise. You understand me," she continued, "the professed are the trees already bearing

fruit, you are the white blossoms, but you will not disappoint our hopes. You have begun too well for that."

On the 28th of March, the Roman novitiate was consecrated to Our Lady of Seven Dolours, and their Mother General bade the novices never forget that by this act they made choice of martyrdom, after the example of the Queen of Martyrs. She was most anxious to transfer them to Santa Rufina, but it took a long time to arrange every thing. "Business matters crawl at a snail's pace here," she wrote; "for us Frenchwomen it is killing work, and we want the patience of saints."

And in another letter: "Our Lord wishes to teach me to curb my eagerness. I hope I shall submit meekly to His will, but it is what I find most trying." When every thing was ready, the Cardinal Protector expressed the wish that, according to custom, the removal should be made solemnly and in procession. The bare idea of such publicity was a terror to Mother Barat. "Imagine," she wrote to Mother Grosier, "all of us on foot, and, as it seems, taper in hand; whilst our chaplains and the Cardinal with his suite lead the procession! What a sight we should be!" She pointed out that the distance from the Trinità to Santa Rufina made it impossible, and no more was said. "Thank God," she exclaimed; "I should have died of shame on the way." The removal was effected very quietly, and Mother Barat was present at the first Mass, said in a temporary chapel. She stayed on for a few days, and then left Mother Desmarquest there as Superior, and in charge of the noviceship.

At her farewell audience of Pope Gregory XVI., Mother Barat ventured to say how happy it would make her, if she possessed a few words written by his hand. All she hoped for was a short word of blessing, but the Pope wrote a long Brief, which she received two days after her audience. Every line showed the fatherly interest he took in the Society, his satisfaction at the way it was governed, and his desire to encourage its labours. "It is with all Our heart," he said, "that We bless the work, for the foundation of which Our

well-beloved daughter bears so many fatigues, and which she governs and presides over with so much wisdom."

On June 3rd., the day after receiving this precious Brief, Mother Barat left Rome. Her first halt was at Parma. After a very cordial reception, she was shown the convent of which she was entreated to take possession. It had been a Benedictine monastery, but, since the Revolution, had been used only as an asylum for some aged and infirm religious, who were now to be provided for elsewhere. It was an immense building, close to the palace, from which it was separated only by a church used as the ducal chapel. Mother Barat would willingly have left the old religious, for whom she had great compassion, to finish their days within its walls, and begged that another house might be found for her community. But this was not to be, and the monastery became the property of the Society, except some rooms decorated with frescoes by Correggio, which were walled off and given up to the School of Art.

The boarding school was to be for the children of noble families, but in compensation, Mother Barat stipulated for a poor school. The Archduchess provided generously for all expenses. She had the buildings put into good repair and furnished, and she also prepared the rooms in which the poor school was to be taught. To the end of her life she took to heart the interests of the house, and showed the utmost esteem for Mother Barat. When every thing was concluded, Mother Barat left for Turin, having promised to send a community to Parma in the following spring.

Mother de Limminghe had returned to Turin from Rome at the beginning of 1833, but she rejoined Mother Barat at Parma and went with her to Chambery. There they both made a retreat, under the direction of an austere and fervent missionary, who did not shrink from leading others by the same rugged road of penance in which he himself walked. He found kindred souls in both, but especially in Mother Barat, whose love of mortification, not now held in check, led her to inflict on herself continual suffering. "We have a great saint

here," wrote the missionary; "she has as much taste for penance as most people have for sugar."

What her exterior penances were, transpired to some extent. She made herself, amongst other things, a girdle of prickly leaves, which she wore until a lay-sister found it and carried it away, but its absence was soon supplied for by a still more penitential iron chain, which stained her clothes with blood. "When one thinks," she wrote, shortly before, to Mother de Limminghe, "of all that Jesus and Mary, sinless as they were, suffered for us, one's courage rises, especially when there is much to expiate; and you know my needs in this matter."

Her interior mortification far exceeded her exterior penances, and her soul had never been more closely and deeply united with God than during this retreat.

From Chambéry she sent to all the houses of the Society a circular letter, inviting the Superiors to the General Congregation to be held in Paris in September. After having made known the Holy Father's Brief, she added: "It is time we should understand our obligations. It is time we should correspond to the desires of the Sacred Heart for this little Society which It loves so much, on which It showers so many blessings; over and over again our Lord has miraculously protected it. . . . We should go forward with giant strides. The times in which we live do not admit of the easy-going life that might have sufficed in other conditions and in less troubled days. The longing to save souls and help the Church should produce in our hearts burning desires of helping on her work."

Early in August, Mother Barat went to La Ferrandière, and visited for the first time the community at Annonay. From thence she went to Besançon and Montet, spent the early part of September at Metz, and arrived in Paris on the 12th. It was a joyful return; she had left, two years before, crippled and infirm, she came back cured. The Society had, in this interval, passed through many trials; it had lost many true and powerful friends, but as the Superiors of the various houses gathered once more round their Mother General, in the weeks that followed her return to the Hotel Biron, they

could only thank God that He had made all things, even its sorrows, turn to its greater good.

"I do little," she wrote to Mother de Limminghe, "but suffer; I pray, and our Lord works. You know that He produces His greatest works from nothing, and He chooses the calm and darkness of the night for action. Oh, if we understood this, how we should hide ourselves, how we should sink into our nothingness!"

CHAPTER XXIX

LOUISIANA. 1833.

Now, — the tuning and the tension,
Wailing minors, discords strong,
Afterwards the grand ascension
Of the Alleluia song.

HAVERGAL.

THE assembly which met in Paris on September 29th, 1833, forming the Fifth General Congregation of the Society of the Sacred Heart, had not any business to transact of such importance as that which had occupied the Mother Councillors on previous occasions.

With regard to the schools, the Plan of Studies was revised, corrected, and amplified, and special stress was laid on the necessity of neglecting nothing to form the pupils to habits of order and economy, and to give them a taste for what is useful and simple. As to the community life, the only alterations were to insist on greater strictness in the manner of carrying out the vow of Poverty, and a more stringent observance of enclosure. Mother de Limminghe proposed that the particle *de* should be suppressed in the surnames of the religious, but the motion was negatived on account of the confusion the change might occasion in legal documents.

Two other acts of the assembly, the suppression of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut and the recall of Mother Eugénie Audé from America, concerned Mother Duchesne very nearly. It was now fifteen years since she had begun her labours in the New World, and their history is a record of hardship, of disappointments, discouragements, and trials, enough to have broken any spirit less indomitable than hers. The net result

was that six houses had been founded, all in the valley of the Mississippi, between St. Michel and St. Louis, and for the present Mother Barat would make no further foundation, especially in that part of the United States. Several other missionary Sisters had joined them, from time to time, as Mother Barat could spare those on whose endurance she could rely. The first was Mother Lucile Mathevon, whom Mother Duchesne had trained as a child in the school at Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, and who ascribed her vocation for the missions, under God, to the teaching she there received. Her travelling companion was Anna Murphy, who, when she made her vows, had taken the name of Xavier, showing that her hope was to imitate the zeal of the Apostle of the Indies. By degrees, from the Old World and the New, there grew up round Mother Duchesne a body of religious full of the true spirit of the Sacred Heart, and united in every thought and act to the centre of their Society. The most successful worker was Mother Audé.

As years went on and Mother Duchesne felt the increasing burden of age and infirmities, her humility led her to think herself only a hindrance to God's work, and to implore that she might be set aside. "My misfortune," she wrote to Mother Barat, "is that I have lost sight of the lines in which you traced out for me the portrait of our Blessed Lord, as He appeared in His intercourse with men. Alas! how different am I from my Chief and Model; how unlike you, who never broke the 'bruised reed!'" In 1829, Mother Barat wished that the Superiors of the six houses should hold a kind of provincial Council, under Mother Duchesne's presidency, to insure uniformity in details, but the latter implored that the meeting might be held without her. "I am but a worn-out staff," she said, "fit only to be thrown away." And a little later: "Every thing goes badly in my hands. I am like an old lion that has lost his strength, whom every thing frets and irritates." She yielded, however, when Mother Barat maintained the order, and the Council took place in the house at St. Michel, of which Mother Audé was Superior. This house was in a flourishing condition. Each convent at that

time was directly under the Superior General, to whom alone the local Superior was responsible, and Mother Audé had been in the habit of consulting Mother Duchesne on spiritual matters, but on these alone. Mother Duchesne's position at this Council was therefore an extremely difficult one. She had in general no claim to authority beyond that of her experience, and the questions that arose had to be decided by majority of votes. Mother Barat intended Mother Duchesne's opinion to prevail, but failure was the common issue of her enterprises, whilst Mother Audé's always met with success. "What weight could my words carry," wrote Mother Duchesne to Mother Barat, "in a house like this where every thing meets with admiration from those within and those without, whilst my own work is in such a different state?" When the report of this Council, drawn up by Mother Duchesne, was forwarded to Mother Barat, she saw that, though good had been done, much still remained to do. How this good was to be effected was henceforth the problem which she pondered over, and which was solved, for the time, by the General Congregation of 1833.

The meeting at St. Michel was a dividing line which cut Mother Duchesne's work in America into distinct parts. She had been the pioneer, but, by the light of her experience, others could tread more profitably in the path she had opened out, and during the fifteen years that had still to elapse, hers became more and more the hidden work of prayer, suffering, and humiliation. On her return to St. Louis from Lower Louisiana, she wrote again to beg that another Superior might be named instead of herself, insisting with the greater hope of success on account of the failure of her recent mission. The arrival of another missioner was announced: "Name her Superior here," she implored of Mother Barat, "I will keep so quietly in my corner, that I shall not be at all in her way. I should add that most willingly would I go anywhere else, if I did not feel that I should only be a burden on account of my age and seniority in religion, and because I cannot manage the correspondence with the parents. Those who speak English

do not understand me, and for the Creoles, a better exterior is necessary. It is best that I should be lost sight of, and work either as infirmarian or as mistress in the school. I say this in all sincerity, just as I should strive to carry it out."

These repeated entreaties were not without their effect on Mother Barat, and as time went on she found it hard not to yield to them, backed up as they were by letters from America, which spoke of the loss of position entailed on the house in St. Louis, by Mother Duchesne's determination to cling to old ways, and her desire that the convents of the Sacred Heart in America should be framed upon the model of the early French foundations, a type quite unsuited to her actual surroundings.

Mother Barat's great desire would have been to uphold Mother Duchesne, for she knew that sanctity like hers is of untold value, and far outweighs ability. But she yielded at length. "The accounts that reach me from America," she wrote in November, 1831, "make me uneasy about your house at St. Louis. I have groaned inwardly for a long time past at its want of success, and the trouble it gives you. I hoped it would have prospered like St. Michel and Grand-Coteau, as friends had led me to believe it might. But from what I know now, I see we shall never attain this result, if we do not adopt another plan which I will now submit to you." She then names to her a Superior, Assistant, and Mistress General for St. Louis, and continues: "You, dear Mother, might retire either to St. Charles or Fleurissant, wherever you think you could work most usefully." She then alludes to what she heard of Mother Duchesne's tendency to fall behind the times and thus to lose opportunities of doing good, and adds: "God forbid that I should blame you, dear Mother; I know too well what you have done and suffered; but times change, and to keep up with them, we must change and modify our methods. . . . How many crosses weigh on us, dear Philippine! Every day brings fresh ones. It seems to me that God acts thus only to detach us from earth, to purify us, and prepare us for our passage to eternity."

"I have received your letter of November 30th," Mother Duchesne wrote in answer, "in which you tell me of the new arrangements for the house of St. Louis. My own bent towards what is lowly will make me content and happy anywhere, so long as I am not unemployed, and even if I were, I think God would give me the grace to bear it. I am fully persuaded that I have not the gifts necessary for governing, and one of my most fervent prayers has long been to obtain from you my successor. She will, I trust, establish regularity and win the hearts of all."

One thing Mother Duchesne had still to do by Mother Barat's wish, namely, to consult the Bishop on the matter and abide by his decision. The Bishop of St. Louis was by this time no longer Mgr Dubourg, who, broken down by labour, disappointments, and ingratitude, had, to the great sorrow of his flock, returned to France, where he received the appointment to the archbishopric of Besançon. It was, therefore, before his successor, Mgr Rosati, that Mother Duchesne laid the question of the advisableness of a change in the government of the house, and his opinion was decidedly against such change. He wrote to Mother Barat, speaking in the highest terms of Mother Duchesne, of her personal sanctity, and of the influence she possessed. He said that no one who succeeded her could do what she did, and that for his own part, there were few people whom he revered and respected like her.

His letter, and that of Mother Duchesne just quoted, reached Mother Barat at the same time, in May, 1832, when she was at Aix, and she wrote from there: "I defer all the more readily to Mgr Rosati's wish, that the contrary proceeding was very painful to me. I yielded to your desires, expressed so perseveringly and with such energy, especially as many other prudent people thought like you. I am delighted, my dear child, that they were mistaken, and that on your part it was humility alone that made you urge the point. I hope God will help and sustain you, as He has done till now in your difficult charge. Go on fulfilling it as long as you can."

The burden, then, was not to be lifted, but God willed that

fresh sorrows should soon be added to those Mother Duchesne had known before.

"The cholera is in St. Louis," she wrote to Mother Barat in October, 1832, "the school is broken up, and the panic will last many months, they say. . . . May God be praised for all. He is always a Father and always good. He shows His special providence over us in the midst of our afflictions, for with death all round us, no one has been attacked in our houses." Six months later, terrible news reached her from St. Michel. She heard it only indirectly, for letters took a month to reach St. Louis. The cholera was raging violently in Lower Louisiana, and four deaths had occurred in the convent. Mother Duchesne's anxiety about Mother Audé, and indeed about all there, was intense. When, at last, the letters came, their contents were not of a nature to allay either anxiety or sorrow. With frightful rapidity one religious after another had been struck down, in a house crowded to overflowing. Mother Audé had reserved to herself the task of nursing those attacked, by night as well as by day. When she was entreated by friends outside the convent to leave her post, lest she also should succumb, she told them, that to separate her from her Sisters would be worse than death. They then hired a steam-boat to take all the religious to a house made ready to receive them, in a place as yet free from cholera, but their efforts were fruitless. Mother Audé would, as she herself said, rather be torn in pieces than leave the sufferers. When the epidemic was over, she fell dangerously ill, and only recovered to meet fresh trials in the deaths of three more of her community.

"Are these the last links of this chain of sorrow?" she wrote to Mother Barat in December, 1833. "God knows, and this should be enough for me. My heart is broken; each one of those I have lost has taken part of my own life with her. However if this is God's good pleasure, I surrender myself to all; but pray for me. Ask that my faith may not waver, and that no shadow of complaint may come to my lips, still less to my heart. To spend some time with you would strengthen

my poor soul, and help me to suffer with more courage ; Mother, good Mother, will you not grant me this ? Forgive me ; what I ask is against complete surrender of self. Do with me what you will ; my will is *yours* to my last sigh, and if this sigh is one of suffering, it will mean also submission, and the happiness of dying under obedience to you."

This letter crossed one from Mother Barat, written in November of the same year, in which she told her that the General Congregation had just chosen her Assistant General for America, that she was to visit the American houses and then embark for France, to give an account of her mission. "We will keep you as short a time as possible," the letter added, "but it is important that you should come as soon as you can." Mother Audé's joy at the hope of seeing Mother Barat broke out in the letter she wrote in answer. "Is it true then that I shall see you! that soon I shall be saying, not, 'I shall see you,' but, 'I see you!' If there is happiness anywhere on earth, it will be in my heart then!" She did not think when, in the following June she left America, that she was never to return, but so it proved. The same year also took from Mother Duchesne her other first companion, Octavie Berthold, who died in July, 1833, of cancer, after terrible sufferings. She had prayed, ten years before, that the great beauty, which exercised too natural an attraction upon the children, might be taken from her, and very soon symptoms appeared of the disease, which disfigured her more and more as time went on, and at last ended her life. Never for one instant did she repent of her offering. Her words : "I would not change my sufferings for all the crowns in the world," were the faithful expression of her thought.

But the loss of Octavie Berthold, and the departure of Eugénie Audé, were not to fill up the measure of Mother Duchesne's trials of that year, for the General Congregation of 1833 decreed the suppression of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, the object of such intense and long-standing affection on her part. We have seen how much cause Mother Barat had to be dissatisfied about the state of the convent on her last visit.

Since then, Grenoble had put forward a claim to the site, and barracks, which would overlook the enclosure, were being built close by. Rumours of these changes had reached Mother Duchesne in 1832, and she wrote: "What is happening to my dear house? I must have lost favour with my patron, St. Francis Regis, since his beneficent influence is no longer felt there. But no, I will hope on." A letter from Mother Barat herself at length brought the news that there was no further hope. "Your name, dear Philippine, was often on our lips during the meetings of the Congregation. How could it be otherwise, for you are never forgotten. It was with great sorrow that we were obliged to suppress the house of Sainte-Marie which was so dear to you. We had no choice, alas! The town has taken it. Pray much for us."

Mother Duchesne wrote in answer that this ruin fell like lead upon her heart. "I could sooner forget my right hand," she added, "than that delightful home. It is right for me to mourn for it, even more than Jeremias mourned over Jerusalem. Tell those who were with me there, and who have borne the sorrow of leaving it for ever, how deeply I share their grief." But Sainte-Marie was saved from destruction, for a community of Ursulines was established there soon after, and still carries on within its walls the work of education.

The General Congregation closed its sittings in October, 1833, after electing Mother Elizabeth Galitzin Secretary General. When Mother Barat wrote to inform her of this, and to recall her to Paris, she said: "I hope you will receive the news of your promotion in all humility. The charge brings more labour than honour. You will have opportunities of practising patience, and that is all."

CHAPTER XXX

NOVICESHIP AT MONTET. 1833–1838.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it. — St. Matt. xiii.

THE sittings of the Fifth General Congregation were scarcely at an end, when Mother Barat began a series of visits to the different convents in the north of France. She went to Beauvais, Lille, and Amiens, and returned to Paris on Christmas Eve.

In February, 1834, she started again, and went to Tours, Poitiers, Niort, and Bordeaux. At Bordeaux, she found the two communities united under one roof. Mother de Lalanne was very ill, and the end was drawing near, but in the deep peace which she expressed by saying: "When my soul is full of God, all it wants is silence and love."

From Bordeaux, Mother Barat went to Lyons, where she arrived on April 6th. The city was again on the eve of an outbreak of insurrection; but the day after her arrival, it was still quiet, and a meeting of the Children of Mary was held at the Rue Boissac. The next day, all communication was cut off with the world beyond the city gates. The rioters had seized the heights above Lyons, and held out there against the regular troops. "I have never suffered so much," Mother Barat wrote to Mother Eugénie de Gramont. "For six whole days we have been invested, hemmed in, and surrounded by troops and artillery, for Bellecour is the head-quarters of this little army. The booming of cannon and the obstinate

and murderous rattle of musketry are almost continual, day and night. The Days of July were nothing to it. Some quarters of the town are now a wreck from the effects of the bombardment and of fires. . . . We are told that had the insurrection succeeded, it would have been all over with us. Our Lady saved us. We prayed a great deal to her."

Early in May, Mother Barat returned to Paris for three months. It was at this time that the orphanage was transferred to Conflans, as it had outgrown the accommodation at the Rue de Varenne; also the country house of the Archbishop, in the same place, was bought by the Society, for a school.

In August, Mother Barat and Mother de Limminghe left for Charleville, to visit a community occupied in the free education of the poor. They belonged to the same body as the *Dames de Ste. Sophie* at Metz, and wished to follow their example. Mother Barat spent some time amongst them, and the necessary changes were carried out in the course of the ensuing months.

Another community of teaching nuns at Marseilles, the *Dames de St. Pierre*, also sought affiliation to the Society of the Sacred Heart. At their head, was the niece of their foundress, Louise de Bourcet, who had known Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, and always longed to be numbered amongst Mother Barat's children. But the opposition her desire met with wore her out, and when the difficulties were at length removed, she was at the point of death, "in sight," as she said, "of the Promised Land." Mother Barat sent her the cross worn by the professed of the Society, and deeply regretted her loss. "We were unworthy to possess her amongst us," she said, when she heard that all was over.

Mother Eugénie Audé had arrived in Paris in June of this year, and Mother Barat named her to go to Marseilles, and take charge of the house there. It was a strange dispensation of Providence that she should find herself, there also, face to face with the trial from which she had suffered so much at St. Michel. The cholera was raging at Marseilles, but no children were withdrawn from school at St. Joseph's,

as the parents felt sure they would be safer there than they could be anywhere else.

"The Cross is indeed your portion," Mother Barat wrote. "In America, yours was the only house that suffered from cholera, and here again you meet it once more. . . . However, I have every confidence that Jesus and Mary will bring you safely through the trial." "Consecrate the house to our Lady," she wrote again. "Suggest to the Bishop that a procession of the townspeople be ordered to *Notre Dame de la Garde;* let some promise be made to her as well."

Only one person was attacked by cholera at St. Joseph's, and it seemed as if this had been allowed to show what Mother Audé's self-devotion was. She had the patient removed to her own room, and nursed her there until she recovered.

For the three months that followed, an attack of fever kept Mother Barat at La Ferrandière between life and death, and from January to June, 1835, there is not a single letter from her indefatigable pen. Before leaving Lyons she wrote to Mother Audé: "Start, now that the cholera has disappeared; rest awhile at Avignon, and then come on here as quickly as you can. I cannot go away without seeing you." Mother Audé was her travelling companion to Paris, and then returned to Marseilles. Her hopes of remaining for any time with Mother Barat were always frustrated. "With all the fervour I have, I pray the Sacred Heart to guide and console you, and sustain your courage," the latter wrote. . . . "If our Lord sees good to try us thus we must not complain, but let Him have His way."

On the 26th of June, feast of the Sacred Heart, Mother Barat was at Brussels, and renewed her vows in the temporary chapel of a building which was to become in course of time a centre of holy activity. A foundation had long been wished for in Belgium. Mother Barat had visited Brussels and the neighbourhood in August, 1834, and two months later, Mother de Charbonnel went there, and bought, in the village of Jette St. Pierre, less than two miles from the town, a charming property suitable in every way for the purpose for which it was needed. The village owes its name to the fact that a large

painting in the church represents St. Peter casting his nets at our Lord's word. "We hope," wrote Mother de Wall, the first Superior of the house, "that St. Peter will help us to cast our nets, so as to catch many souls, and that we too shall bring in a miraculous draught of fishes." At the time of Mother Barat's visit, the walls of the new convent were rising rapidly, and she may have foreseen a great future for the place, but could she have dreamed that those walls would, as they have now done for many years, gather daily within them from eleven to twelve hundred persons, poor and rich?

On her return to Paris, she set about a work which she had already announced to the Society by a circular letter dated June 4th, 1835. This was the establishment of a second house in Paris to be the usual residence of the Mother General, the Mother House of the Society. It was also to be a house of noviceship. The house chosen belonged to the Marquis de Nicolay, who let it to the Society. It was in the Rue Monsieur, separated from the Hotel Biron only by the Rue de Babylone. The novices removed there on July 10th, and Mother Barat spent the autumn and winter months of 1835 amongst them. She was still there, when in January, 1836, she lost an old and dear friend, Mother de Gramont d'Aster, who died the death of a saint at Le Mans, where she was Superior. When she felt the approach of death, she set all in order, and then said to her secretary: "Now every thing is ready; I have only to suffer and abandon myself to God." She worked on, however, in spite of protracted sufferings, busying herself to the end about the poor and the children. When at last she was obliged to lay down her arms altogether, it was with indescribable peace and joy that she prepared to give up her soul to God.

"What a loss she is to us!" Mother Barat wrote. "Her two daughters are in deep grief. . . . In this way every year that I live I shall see our dearest friends leave us, and shall have to weep for those on whom I have leant most securely. It is true they all die as they have lived, like saints; what a lesson for us!" On the second Sunday after Easter, the

feast of the Good Shepherd was celebrated at the Rue Monsieur. "The sorry shepherdess came in for her share," Mother Barat wrote, "but they knew I was going away the next day, and this damped their joy. It is not pleasant to see a shepherdess forsake her flock." She left the next day, April 18th, with Mother de Limminghe and a lay-sister, for the south.

On the 25th of April she was at Lyons, and on the 28th at Avignon. "We left Avignon a week ago," she wrote from Perpignan on May 8th, 1836. "It was a trying journey, for between Nissan and Narbonne the rivers had overflowed their banks; the whole of that level tract of country was under water: no roads were to be seen. 'Ah!' said Sister Mary, 'if I were not with you I should be frightened, but as you are here I am not at all afraid.' Her confidence in us increased mine in our Blessed Lord, and I said the same words to Him with far better reason."

From Perpignan she went on to Marseilles, where she found the fusion of the two communities working exceedingly well, and she gave Mother Audé's good government the credit it deserved. "To my taste," she said, "this is the most beautiful house we have. It combines every thing, a lovely view, meadows, waterfalls, groves, shaded walks, vineyards, cornfields, and the house is large and well arranged." There was in the garden a tree known as "the olive-tree of peace," and she sometimes assembled the community beneath its shade. At other times these meetings took place in a wood where hymns were sung of which the last words were caught up and repeated by a sounding echo. One thing, however, was wanting, and that the most important in Mother Barat's eyes. The chapel was very poor, and David's wish to build a temple to the Lord came spontaneously before her mind when she paid there her first visit to the Blessed Sacrament. She carried out her desire, and a beautiful chapel was built in the left wing of the house.

From Marseilles, she visited in succession Aix, Avignon, Annonay, La Ferrandière, and Chambéry. In August, she was once more at Montet, where she remained until October.

Amongst the novices at this time was Josephine Gœtz, who nearly thirty years later was to succeed Mother Barat as Superior General. It was not the first time they had met, for Josephine was at school at Besançon when Mother Barat went there in 1832, and this visit, unknown to herself, had decided her vocation. "I shall never forget the impression Mother Barat made upon me the first time I saw her," she wrote afterwards. "A supernatural influence took hold of me and entered into the very depths of my soul. I felt that I was in the presence of one who was clothed with God Himself." The next day was the feast of the Assumption, and on leaving the chapel after Mass she said to one of her companions: "Our Lord has just given me, in my Communion, an overwhelming grace." This grace was that of a religious vocation, and six months later she entered the noviceship at Montet.

Josephine Gœtz was an Alsatian; and, having early lost her parents, had, with her sister, been brought up by an aunt, who devoted herself with admirable success to the task of educating the orphan children. But when Josephine was about fourteen, her aunt thought that she would do better at school, and in spite of the tears of the child, who loved her tenderly, she placed her in the convent of the Sacred Heart at Besançon. As a last argument to induce Mdlle Gœtz to change her mind, Josephine had urged the plea that perhaps if she were sent to school she should become a nun, and then she should leave her aunt for ever. "I should be very sorry to lose you," her aunt answered, "but, all the same, I should think you very happy." After this Josephine had no refuge but her tears.

Mother Toussenel was the Mistress General at that time at Besançon, and when Mdlle Gœtz gave Josephine into her care she spoke of a tendency in the child to be headstrong, which sometimes caused her uneasiness. For some time after the beginning of her school-life, Josephine lived in a world of her own, noticing all that went on, but keeping apart, observing in general the letter of the school rule, but opposing a silent, dogged resistance to any thing she did not wish to do. She was unhappy, and nursed her unhappiness, because she thought

her aunt would then take her home. But by the beginning of the next school year, in October, 1821, she had found that this hope was vain, and then she threw herself with all the ardour of her nature into her school-life. Her ability had scarcely been suspected till then, but now her success was "despairing," as her class companions expressed it. At the games she was worth ten others, and her camp was sure of victory. Yet this superiority was never galling to her companions. She was full of tact and kindness, and soon became a centre round which they were delighted to move. She gave her commands, and met with ready and admiring obedience from her little army.

The faculty of command was innate in her, but the desire to obey was not equally marked. She kept aloof from the mistresses, and in little things maintained in herself and others a certain independence of authority, that might in time lead to graver evils. However, this was checked by the prudence of Mother Toussenel, and Josephine's heart was gradually opened to higher influences. One day whilst she was sitting at her desk, a sudden light showed her the beauty and the necessity of humility, and from that day forward she began to fight against her pride. In her noviceship, what struck those who knew something of the secrets of her soul was, first, her constant application to seek God and God alone by the conscientious performance of her duty, and next, her deep contempt of self. Hence resulted the joy she took in seeing herself humbled, and a sort of indifference for any personal satisfaction. In conversation, she once remarked to her companions, how much struck she had been in reading the Life of St. Aloysius, to see that he never allowed himself to be without some mortification ; even if it were only in his position, whether sitting or standing, and those who heard her could not help thinking that this was exactly what she did herself.

Life in the noviceship at Montet was exceedingly hard. The cold was intense in winter, and there were no adequate means of warming the rooms. Sister Josephine always avoided taking advantage of any alleviations that were provided, and

health and strength suffered in consequence. Soon after she had made her vows she fell ill, and her life was in danger, to the great grief of all, and especially of Mother Coppens, who counted on her to do great things for God. She recovered, and in the following year went with her Superior to Alsace, on the business of a new foundation, and soon afterwards was sent to Besançon, where her knowledge of children, and her extreme tact and skill in dealing with them, restored the discipline, which had for a time become relaxed. And this beginning was the earnest of what was to come, for everywhere the penetration of her mind, and the soundness of her judgment, joined to her great virtue, gave her an ascendency over others which became every year more marked.

The day Sister Josephine Gœtz took the habit of the Society of the Sacred Heart, a lay-sister was also clothed at Montet, whose spirit was akin to hers, though their outward paths through life—even through religious life—diverged very widely. Mother Barat must have looked forward, when she came to Montet in 1836, to seeing this Sister, whom she had herself sent there two years before, and whose history was known only to herself. To all other eyes she was an awkward, ignorant person, but of unfailing humility under the results of the many accidents that were consequent on her clumsiness. Yet she was by birth a lady, and was highly educated and of distinguished talents. Pauline de St. André de la Laurencie de Villeneuve was at this time about thirty years of age. She had called on Mother Barat in Paris, and told her of her great desire to enter the Society as a lay-sister, that she might carry out a vow she had made at the time of her First Communion to immolate herself to God as a victim of expiation for her family.

She had remained several years in the world to educate and establish in life her younger sister, and, when this was done, had offered herself as a lay-sister to a community in Bordeaux. But the Superior refused to accept her. It seemed to her too great a sacrifice, that with every thing education can give to enhance the value of natural qualities of the highest

order, she should bury all in this obscure and hidden life. She gave her, however, an introduction to the convent of the Sacred Heart, and a retreat there decided her choice irrevocably. "There are no outward austerities," she wrote to her sister, "but continual warfare against self. The Rule may be summed up as perfect obedience, complete abnegation." This was what she wanted; she went to Paris and saw Mother Barat, who, finding that she was immovable in the determination to be only the *servant of the servants of Jesus Christ*, sent her to Montet, where she was known only as Sister Elizabeth. The end of her noviceship was now drawing near, and Mother Barat again examined her vocation, and tried to make her understand that, with her education, she ought to place her gifts at the service of our Lord. Sister Elizabeth, with all her humility, was very firm. "Did not our Lord give glory to His Father by the annihilation of His life on earth?" she asked. "Assuredly He did." "Well, Reverend Mother, my vocation and my desire are to glorify Him in the same way." Mother Barat was silent. She knew how mysterious are sometimes the ways by which God may lead a soul, but she also knew that these strange paths are often beset with illusion, and as she wanted to see more of Sister Elizabeth before allowing her to take her vows, she arranged that when she left Montet, she should go with her to Chambéry, and afterwards to Turin. "There we shall see," she said, when telling her of these plans. "Yes, we shall see," Sister Elizabeth answered brightly, "we shall see, Reverend Mother, that with God's help I shall have the happiness of bringing you round to my plan: and it will be no small triumph."

Montet, buried as it was amongst the snows of Switzerland, and its forests of pine and oak, was just the place for one who, like Sister Elizabeth, was to disappear altogether from the eyes of the world, and live only for God. Sometimes six whole months would pass without a single visitor from without. A small but carefully chosen boarding school furnished some means of support, and this slender income was eked out by the produce of manual labour, in which all joined. The best

riches of the house was the contentment of its inhabitants, and their absence of desires for any thing but the poor and laborious life which was their portion. The Superior and Mistress of Novices was Mother Henriette Coppens, whose ascendency over others was asserted by means of two predominant characteristics, practical common sense and undeviating rectitude. There was a certain reserve in her calm and measured manner which at first kept people at a distance, but she soon won their confidence, and it was never withdrawn. To live without fixing your heart on any thing, to suffer, to cling to the Cross, to say only *yes* and *no*—*yes* always to grace, *no* always to nature were amongst the maxims which she inculcated on her novices, and which she taught them by example more than by word of mouth.

In spite of their solitude, the novices of Montet were not wanting in spiritual help. Their chaplain, the Abbé Pieau, was a man of learning and deep piety. The Bishop of Fribourg often came to the convent, and his instructions to the religious were the familiar conversations of a true father. He came once on the eve of making a pilgrimage to Einsiedeln, and asked the novices what virtue he should beg our Lady to obtain for them. "Obedience," was the spontaneous and unanimous reply, and indeed this virtue was characteristic of this noviceship.

The Jesuits, established not only in their college at Fribourg, but also at Estavayer, on Lake Neuchatel, were the usual preachers to the community. Father de Ravignan came to make his tertianship at Estavayer, and during that time often came to Montet. He gave a retreat there which produced great fruit. Fathers Varin and Druilhet also came occasionally. On one of his visits Mother Henriette begged Father Varin to give a retreat, but he refused and had even left the house to return to Estavayer. Soon, however, he retraced his steps. "Our Lady has told me to give you the Spiritual Exercises," he said to the novices, in explanation of his reappearance, "and she will help me with her powerful aid;" and the retreat thus inaugurated was marked by many wonderful and signal graces.

A retreat was given during Mother Barat's stay at Montet, in 1836, and before it began she gave a conference on the words: "I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart." (Osee ii. 14.) "You have heard," she said, "it is an infallible promise. God Himself will speak to you, but on condition that you make a solitude in your heart by detachment, fidelity, and self-surrender. Make a wilderness then, and silence, for the Lord is nigh. Hearken to His voice, and whatever sacrifice He asks of you, answer at once: 'My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.'"

One feature of life at Montet was that on certain days in July, the feasts of St. Henry and St. Mary Magdalen, the whole household—religious, numbering about sixty persons, and the school children—went out for a long day in the woods. They encamped at a spot about three miles off, which they called Mount Thabor, whence there was a wide view.

Mother Henriette had a clearing made at this spot leaving in the midst of it a hollow tree in which was placed a statue of our Lady, and here Office was said. The *Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino* was here more full than ever of meaning, and was never recited more fervently than on these occasions. On October 3rd, Mother Barat left Montet, and before the end of the month was again at Turin, which she used to call her "garden of delights." There she again tested Sister Elizabeth's vocation, and finding that it was proof against all trials, she decided upon allowing her to take the vows of a lay-sister in the Society. Her secret was preserved inviolably until her death.

On December 15th, Mother Barat left Turin for Rome, where she arrived on February 11th, 1837. She stayed during the first months at Santa Rufina, and this visit convinced her of the necessity of removing the novitiate elsewhere. The house was crowded to overflowing, and the close, poor streets of the Trastevere were not the surroundings requisite for a novitiate.

Whilst a suitable house was being sought for, Mother Barat enlarged the poor schools, and added to them an infant school,

where the half-starved, neglected children, who swarmed in the streets, were received and taken care of by the nuns.

The search for a house had been nearly abandoned in despair, when one was found which suited the purpose admirably. It used to be known as the Palazzo Lante, from the name of its owners, but it had been uninhabited by them for nearly thirty years, and had been used as a tobacco warehouse. The Trasteverini called it the "old palace of the ghosts." Mother Barat went all over the house before she made up her mind to take it, till she came upon a statue of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours. She drew Mother de Limminghe's attention to it, saying: "This decides me." "There at least we shall breathe," she wrote, a few days later. "The view is lovely. We see the whole of Rome from its best side. We are quite close to St. Peter's, and are on a level with the dome."

The Villa Lante consists of two distinct parts, the palace, and above it, higher on the hill, the Casino. Thither the noviceship was transferred on June 7th, 1837, and Mother Barat spent there with the novices eleven months, the memory of which remains in the Society as one of the most sacred, most tried, and most cherished periods of her existence. She was speaking of this time, when she said that she had spent the most precious moments of her religious life in Rome.

"We are quite cut off from the rest of the world," Mother Barat wrote. "We hear nothing but the bells, and you may think how many of these there are in Rome."

There is scarcely a more beautiful site in Rome than that of the Villa Lante. It stands on the Janiculum between the Longara and the summit, where it is bounded by the battlemented ramparts of the city, at about the level of the Porta San Pancrazio. The view is magnificent. On one hand is the hill where St. Peter was crucified whilst blessing the town and the world, on the other the Vatican and the dome of St. Peter's. St. Onofrio is close by, and adjoining are the gardens of which Tasso wrote shortly before his death: "I have come here not only to breathe the purest air of Rome, but especially to begin

with the pious hermits of this monastery the conversations which I hope to continue in Heaven." Below, rises the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, the oldest basilica in Rome consecrated to the Mother of God.

The Villa commands a bird's-eye view of all Rome, the confused mass of houses, palaces and churches, marked out by the lines of the chief thoroughfares, and broken here and there by some gigantic ruin,—and beyond the city, the Campagna, stretching away to the blue hills of classic Latium. Such is the Villa Lante which, as Father Barrelle said, has all Rome beneath its feet and all heaven above its head. The Trinità is visible from there, and Gregory XVI. compared the two convents to two strongholds whence the Sacred Heart of Jesus watches over and protects the Holy City.

The peace of the Villa Lante was favourable to meditation, and Mother Barat spent long hours in contemplating the annihilation of the Incarnate Word. She prayed either in the little chapel or walking up and down the alley of bay-trees that overlooks the Porta San Pancrazio, and no one spoke to her when she was there. "God followed her very closely," wrote Mother de Limminghe, "and showed her her smallest imperfections." Long ago Monsieur Montaigne had said of Mother Barat: "I never met any one who made so little of themselves;" and as years went on she made less and less of herself. In one of her answers this year to letters of congratulation for the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, she wrote: "Pray hard that I may become less unworthy of you all. My poor children, you are indeed very badly governed. Happily, our Lord has need of no one to do His work, and the less there is of man the more there is of God. If He wished to make use of a mere nothing, He could not, I assure you, have made a better choice."

There were twelve novices at this time in the new house, and alluding to this number Mother Barat said once to them: "I may well repeat the complaint of our Lord: *The harvest is great, but the labourers are few.* However, He who converted the world with twelve poor fishermen may even make use of

you to bring the knowledge and love of His Heart, not only to your own country, but to others also."

The spirit of an apostle was marked in several of these novices, amongst them Caterina Baviera, a god-daughter of Contessa Mastai, mother of Pope Pius IX., and Ursula Simoni who longed for the missions, and died some years later in Louisiana. Teresa Colonna was amongst them too, and Mother Barat loved her on account of her warm heart and the frankness of her character, but she always feared lest her petulant, fiery nature would refuse to submit to the yoke of discipline. And so it proved, for Teresa left the noviceship without making her vows. But she followed hard on Mother Barat's footsteps both in Italy and France, and was seldom away from the shelter of some convent of the Sacred Heart. She always said that if she might have had a dispensation from the Rule of silence, she could have been a nun of the Sacred Heart.

All these novices shared the simple, poor, out-of-door life which Mother Barat lived at the Villa Lante. In autumn they worked with her in gathering the grapes, and when the time came for rest, they sat around her on the ground, and as they listened to her they thought of the other novices in Montet and Paris, wishing they could share their happiness. Sometimes she took them to the grove adjoining San Onofrio, near the plane-trees beneath whose shade St. Philip Neri used to collect and instruct his disciples; and there she would talk to them about this saint, citing the example of his virtues until all resolved to imitate him.

The happiness of this life would have been too complete for earth, if it had not been disturbed by bad news from without, and soon by sorrow within. On May 27th, 1837, Mother Barat wrote to Mother de Gramont: "What a year this is! The constant storms of rain and hail create great anxiety about the crops. There are signs of revolution too,—the Italians are so excitable. God is punishing us, and we deserve it, and yet we are only at the beginning of our troubles." These words were but too true. The cholera had reached Naples and was on the way to Rome. It was within

fifty miles of the city early in July, and when Mother Barat wrote of this, she also described the confident faith shown by the people, the processions in the streets, the numberless Communions, the translation of the miraculous Madonna from the Church of St. Mary Major to that of the Gesù, and the Mass said before it in the latter church by the Holy Father, whose eyes were streaming with tears. By the end of August the daily increasing number of sudden deaths made it impossible for any one to ignore the fact that the cholera was in Rome. It was soon raging in the Trastevere more violently than elsewhere.

Mother Barat was full of anxiety for the community at Santa Rufina, but the Trinità gave her little uneasiness. The anxious solicitude of Mother de Limminghe kept her closely shut up at the Villa, and it was not till later that she learnt that, while Santa Rufina had escaped, six nuns had died at the Trinità within the octave of the Assumption, and a seventh was at the point of death. The news was brought to her by Cardinal de Latil, Archbishop of Rheims, and she wrote on September 28th, 1837: "I cannot express my grief. It nearly killed me. As one name after another passed his lips, I felt as if I were dying. God's mercy upheld me, and, struck like Job, I was able to make the same act of resignation. I am calmer now, but what nights I spend! Now that the scourge has broken through the barrier that, at least in Europe, prevented it from gaining entrance into our Society, I tremble for all the communities within its reach. My agony will be a long one apparently, since this terrible disease takes every one by surprise."

The death of Abbé Perreau, which occurred at this time, caused her much sorrow. Monsieur de Lamarche and Monsieur de Vidaud had preceded him to the grave. All were true friends whose loss was irreparable. Three nuns died in the convent at Aix of cholera, and news of the deaths of those she valued and loved reached Mother Barat from other convents. At Metz, a highly-gifted Mistress of Studies died at the age of thirty-six; shortly before the end she said, to reassure those about her:

"Death for a religious is but the bound of a child into its father's arms."

We want them all so much [Mother Barat wrote], and death goes on snatching them away. It is true we must also make foundations in Heaven. Let us work then for this eternal foundation, and not complain if it increases daily. Soon we too shall form part of it. . . . If the first death (to self) has taken place, the second is consoling, and then we can say with Suarez: "I did not think it was so sweet to die."

God forbid that any murmur should come into my mind, but what a cross [she wrote to Mother de Rozeville]. These Sisters seem to come to us only that we may grieve for them. Our Lord takes to Himself these flowers of innocence, before the sun's rays have robbed them of their bloom. . . . Our part is resignation. We must think ourselves too happy to expiate our faults by sorrow and the Cross.

Mother Barat has herself related the first visit she paid to Santa Rufina and the Trinità after these sad events.

At Santa Rufina [she wrote], I found all the community safe. But what a sight met my eyes in the infant school! Motherless and fatherless children were there of all ages, from three years old to twelve. They had been brought in out of the streets by neighbours, charitable enough, but very poor, and with families of their own to keep. There these little orphans were huddled together, often on the same mattress. It cost me many tears.

I laid it before our Mothers [she continues], that we ought to do at least as much for these little ones as their poor neighbours did. I know that our Sisters are already very much over-crowded, and have heavy debts, but nevertheless I will not leave suffering unrelieved. We shall adopt these children. We will take at once those who have no one to look after them, and the others later on, when our large house is ready. O God, so much want, and no one to give these orphans bread for body and soul! Well, our Lord will help. If we pray and become holy and perfect religious, He will not suffer Himself to be outdone in generosity. Those whom He has spared must offer themselves for every thing. Virtue teaches how to do double work and to do it better.

The next day several of the orphans were taken to the Villa Lante, and the orphanage thus inaugurated is still maintained.

The deaths of these seven religious were, as Mother Barat herself said, seven swords that pierced her heart, and she promised to pray especially for them to Our Lady of Seven Dolours, every day for a year. The blow was, indeed, more than her physical strength could bear, and she was never without fever. "I shall begin my retreat to-night," she wrote on October 26th. "My body and my soul have equal need of being alone with God. I have suffered very much in Rome, but it is in expiation of the faults of a long life, for mine is beginning to become such."

The winter was a trying one, and she was ill throughout it; but the presence of God always made solitude light to her. Mother Boutourlinn, then a novice, was stationed sometimes near the door of her room, to be within call in case she needed help, and relates how she heard her answering, as it were, the singing of some birds in a cage. "Happy little creatures of God," she said to them, "never to have offended your Creator. You perform perfectly what He asks of you, and I, unhappy that I am, offend Him daily! Yet He has loved me and died for me. . . . Come, little birds, sing the praises of God for so many ungrateful men who insult and blaspheme Him. Sing to Him also for me, who am not so worthy as you are to bless Him." Sometimes their chirping awakened her as she was falling asleep. "You are quite right," she said, "to rouse this lazy person, who is resting instead of praising God like you. If you could only know how lovable and good He is, Whose praises you are singing! Yet He feeds you only with a little seed, whilst to me He gives Himself. And I love Him so little!"

Suffering as she was, Mother Barat busied herself about all the affairs of the Society, and several new foundations were made or prepared for, at the end of 1837. One of these was at Nantes, where Mother Thérèse Mailluchcau took possession, in the name of the Society, of a property called l'Eperonnière. It was remarkable that the spot thus consecrated was one on which a band of Vendéen soldiers had been shot, during the Reign of Terror, for openly wearing badges of the Sacred

Heart. A foundation was also made at Tours, in the Rue des Prés, and Mother Deshayes went there as Superior. A third foundation was at Pignerol, near Turin. Sister Elizabeth was sent there, and took her vows on February 10th, the feast of the Five Wounds. Having organized the affairs of the Roman houses, and installed Mother de Limminghe Superior and Mistress of Novices at the Villa Lante, Mother Barat left Rome in May, 1838. She did not arrive in Paris until August of that year, as she stayed *en route* at many of her houses in Italy and the south of France.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RUE MONSIEUR. 1838–1839.

The body without the soul hath no desires; its sensibility cometh from the same source as its movements. And it is the duty of a man with a reasonable soul to deny something to his lower nature. . . . Then will his soul . . . sit often at leisure in the palace of the mind, dwelling on the wisdom of God. There, when the roar and rattle of earthly cares are stilled, will she feed on holy thoughts, and entertain herself with the expectation of the everlasting joy. — St. Leo the Great.

On her arrival in Paris, Mother Barat went directly to the Mother House, and she remained there for the seven following months. There was nothing nearer to her heart than the formation of the novices, and it was always a happiness to her to live amongst them.

The house in the Rue Monsieur, though in the middle of Paris, was not ill-fitted for the purpose to which it was now applied. It was shut off from the busy world, on one side, by its courtyard opening upon a quiet street, and on the other, by its garden and the open spaces near the Boulevard des Invalides. The wings were partitioned off into small rooms, as if it had been arranged for a convent, which made Father Varin say that "God, the great Architect, had planned and built it, on purpose for the noviceship." The chapel was in the centre, and had a large bow-window opening upon the garden. "We are quite by ourselves here," Mother Barat wrote to the Marquis de Nicolay, "and the novices' life is peaceful, regular, and consequently happy. After God, we owe this to you, and do not forget to show our gratitude by our prayers."

Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud, one of three sisters, who had all within the last few years made their noviceship at

Montet, was Mistress of Novices. Some of the extracts from Mother Barat's letters to her will give us an idea of the way she had trained her to overcome the excessive diffidence that might have otherwise prevented her from working usefully for the Society. At Montet, she was named Mistress General soon after she had made her vows, and, about this time, Mother Barat wrote to her: "You carry reserve and timidity too far, and ought to take more on yourself, not from pride, but for the glory of the Sacred Heart. I well understand that it is a sacrifice to resist the attraction which you have for being nothing, and for thinking only of God and your own soul. Pray for help, and, in a few weeks, tell me what progress you have made in this holy boldness."

Two years later, she wrote again:

How is your soul getting on? Whatever work you have on hand, contrive always to find time for your spiritual duties, and on Sundays and festivals, to add an extra hour of prayer.... When we have to give a great deal to others, we must go oftener to the well-spring, otherwise we draw only a drop or two at a time, and can scarcely moisten parched lips. It is only our Lord who can quench our thirst from His superabundance. Redouble your zeal for the advancement of our little white flock. All our hopes are fixed upon it. I may apply to it what our Lord said to His Apostles: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" ... Try for yourself and for your novices to seek out what is strongest and most lasting in virtue. How few discover it! We ought to be transformed into our Lord, whereas we seek ourselves. What can be wider of the mark? ... The flock must be generous and ready for every kind of sacrifice. Their model must be our Lord, humbled, annihilated, crucified. It is thus they will attain perfection, and become worthy spouses of His Sacred Heart.

These lessons of self-forgetfulness, abnegation, and zeal were constantly recurring in Mother Barat's daily intercourse with the novices; for in spite of her many occupations, her intercourse with them was daily, almost hourly. And as they watched her and drank in her words, her ever-increasing sanctity worked its effects in raising, widening, and strengthening their souls. "She often spoke to us," one of them writes,

"of the beginning of the Society, and one day, when she had been describing the foundation at Poitiers, a remembrance which she always loved, 'Who will give me back that noviceship at the Feuillants?' she asked, and added, answering her own question: 'You will do it, dear children.' Then, after enlarging on the happiness of religious life, she said: 'If the world knew what our happiness is, out of sheer envy it would invade our retreat, and the time of the Fathers of the Desert would return, when the solitudes were more populous than the cities.'" It was a favourite saying of hers, that "the noviceship is the antechamber of Heaven."

Yet it is needless to say a noviceship was no child's play in her eyes. The novices were to be taught how to trample nature underfoot, or rather to let it be ground, as the grain in the mill. One day some amongst them were leaving for Jette St. Pierre, then newly founded, and she made this comparison to those who were staying in Paris: "The noviceship is like the Society's mill," she said. "The grain is brought from all parts, and when it is well ground, and the flour separated from the coarse bran, it is sent off, and more comes. There must be nothing but flour, pure, fine, and white, to be worthy of our Lord, the Bread of Life."

But if the noviceship is a mill, the work is done in it by Divine love, and Mother Barat knew no other way of effecting the transformation in souls, than by fanning its flames. Once Mother Grosier, on a visit to Paris, told the novices that she had been longer in the Society than any one, and as she was getting very old she had only Heaven or Purgatory to look forward to. But Mother Barat stopped her by saying that the love of our Lord and zeal for souls were the only Purgatory she knew of for a spouse of the Sacred Heart. "That is a very sweet Purgatory, you will admit," Mother Grosier rejoined. "I own it is sweet to love," said Mother Barat, "but love has its torment. Can there be for us a greater pain than to see our Beloved offended?" "Love, Thou art not loved," she used to exclaim with St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, and she would add: "Well, if the fire of love is extinguished on earth, God

and man must find it again in the Sacred Heart." Her zeal made her most anxious that the noviceships of the Society should be full. The constant cry of her heart was: "The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers few." "Your list of postulants and novices rejoiced me," she wrote to Mother Eulalie, "and I pray our Lord to send us double the number, great, generous souls, lovers of the Cross. Far be from us narrow little hearts, that seek only their own interests. Such people hinder rather than help on God's work."

It was no wonder that she wished to see the noviceships full, for she knew the needs on every side. Missionary Bishops often came to the Rue Monsieur to plead the cause of struggling dioceses in distant lands, and she longed to respond to their appeals. She wrote in 1836: "I am obliged to turn a deaf ear to urgent entreaties from many parts of the world, Poland, the north of Germany, Wallachia, the United States, to say nothing of almost every large town in France." One day she told the novices that she had been begged for a house in Holland, and one in New York. "Shall you not accept?" they eagerly inquired. "Whom have I to send?" "Send us," some replied. "You, indeed, mere novices, and such novices too!" Then after a pause: "How many are you?" she inquired, and when told that they were forty, she continued: "It is my fault that you are not more numerous; if I had been what I ought, you might have been four hundred instead of forty." Mother de Bouchaud then came to the rescue by suggesting that if each one tried to be worth ten, that would make four hundred at once, and they promised to multiply their number thus.

A poor school had been established in connection with the convent of the Rue Monsieur, and a work-room for the older girls on leaving school, a necessary adjunct in Mother Barat's eyes, if lasting good were to be done amongst the poor. "Religious of the Sacred Heart should have two devotions," she used to say, "our Lord and the poor;" and nothing was spared to teach the novices how to work for and to love them, if they had not already learnt these lessons.

But there was one thing Mother Barat wanted more than many novices, and that was that all should have the true spirit of their vocation. "It is better to have few and good," she used to say, "than many second-rate vocations." The cry of her heart was the same always, as it had been, when, in 1811, at Dooresele she exclaimed; "Give me saints, O Lord, otherwise I would rather die." There was something always most respectful in her attitude towards the call of God in a soul. Man's work, she knew well, lies only in fostering the growth of the precious seed, removing the thorns that choke the plant, sheltering it from winds that kill, until it has gained strength, and the roots have struck well into the ground. It was her great desire to see in the souls of the children the wish to live for God alone, but she never allowed the mistresses employed with them to use any means but example to draw them to the desire for religious life. "You talk too much about vocations," she wrote to a Superior. "At least indirectly you lead them that way. This is an old fault of yours; be on your guard against it."

A vocation is God's choice of a soul, and on this principle Mother Barat always acted and made others act. "Receive postulants cordially," she wrote, "but do not lay yourself out to make advances." This reticence, so to speak, on her part, left God's action free, and in innumerable cases the sight of the smile upon her lips, or the touch of her hands as they rested for a moment on the head, brought light to the perplexed or hesitating soul, and showed it that the Sacred Heart was its home in this world and for ever. Her letters to those who sought her advice, show the wisdom and disinterestedness with which she guided them. "You ought not to refuse this offer," she wrote to one, "merely from the fear of risking your salvation by marrying. There must be other reasons which belong to the domain of conscience. I am afraid that some more than imprudent things said to you about married life, have given you false ideas and exaggerated dread of it. People can save and sanctify their souls in that state. How many married saints the Church has raised to her altars."

In a doubt of this kind she generally recommended a retreat or at least prayer, faithfully persevered in, to know the will of God.

The same spirit is shown in the instances that follow. "Pray for your sister," she wrote to one of her religious, "but do not think too much about her. If God calls her to the Visitation, it is right she should follow that attraction. It is a holy and admirable Order, which we shall always revere, so be at peace about her." To another she wrote: "If your niece has no vocation for the Sacred Heart, she could not make a better choice than that of the Carmelites. It is the oldest Order in the Church, and how perfect a one! Yes, I will pray for her, and will ask our Lord that she may be faithful to Him, wherever He calls her." In a convent of the Sacred Heart in Italy, Mother Barat found that it was a constant subject of regret with one of the nuns that the Carmelites had refused her admission for want of a dowry. She wrote at once to the Prioress offering to provide the sum necessary, and the proposal was accepted. One who was in doubt whether to become a Sister of Charity or a nun of the Sacred Heart travelled from the south of France to Paris to consult Mother Barat. She had been at school at a convent of the Sacred Heart, and had a deep love for the Society, but Mother Barat told her that she was convinced her vocation was for the Sisters of Charity, and her word was taken as though God Himself had spoken. But her true respect for vocations did not prevent her from urging the necessity of getting full light about them. She often drew the attention of those called to direct others to the great advantages possessed by the Society of the Sacred Heart in uniting action and contemplation; and thus answering the two-fold attraction of souls towards religious life. "It is a great mistake," she wrote to Mother Galitzin, "to suppose that our Institute is fitted only for those called to the active life. If we had not the contemplative life as well, the other would soon be only a spectre, or a body without a soul, and what good could we do then? Far from discouraging persons who wish for a life of contemplation, we should accept

them gladly. They could be employed in work within the community, or in adoration." It was a pleasure to her to remark, that those who had tried their vocation as Carmelites, and had left on account of health, were happy in the Sacred Heart, because the Institute is based upon prayer and the interior life. "Carmel," she said, "should be planted in the Sacred Heart, as the most beautiful tree in that lovely garden." In 1828, she expressed the following wish, which was in fact her life-long desire: "An Order which unites the contemplative and active life has a powerful grace which sustains its activity in a wonderful way. This spirit is what I feel strongly urged to establish in our Society, before God calls me to Himself. It will maintain interior life. I pray that the Sacred Heart will attract to us a great many souls devoted to prayer. Then I shall say my *Nunc dimittis*, for it is thus I have always understood our Society."

Human considerations, as they are called, affection, advantages of rank or fortune, should never be allowed to influence a heart possessed by God. "Once only in my life," Mother Barat writes, "I had a somewhat natural desire for one who seemed to combine all the gifts that would enable her to do great things for the glory of the Sacred Heart, birth, fortune, education, talents, every appearance of piety and good-will. Probably I had not prayed enough about it, for after having begun well, she became a great cross to me, and ended by leaving the Society." Speaking in another letter of a princess who had likewise left: "We want simpler people," she said, "not these great ladies, they have never succeeded with us. If we had kept them, perhaps pride would have taken possession of many. Ah, my child, let us remain little, as we are. The Incarnate Word chose to be little, and if we go by this road, we shall find the treasures of earth and Heaven.

In 1837, she wrote to Mother de Rozeville, the Superior at Amiens: "I think if she has a true vocation you ought not to refuse the postulant you spoke of to me, although she has no fortune. Our Lord seems to wish us not to rely on birth or talents. We must look at things as He does, and accept

cordially those who are poor. Only we must make sure that they have the capacity for sanctity. Sanctity will uphold the Society more than all human means." Again she wrote: "I have never refused any one for the mere reason of her having no dowry. I think that is why God has blessed us, and His providence has always come to our help."

When a postulant, who had thus been received *in forma pauperis*, was trying to express her gratitude, Mother Barat cut her short by saying: "It is only just that we should receive others as we were received ourselves. These are the terms on which I was myself admitted." "Was it not enough, Reverend Mother," another said, "that you would receive nothing from my parents during my last year at school, because you guessed how poor they were?" She would have continued, but Mother Barat kissed her tenderly, and said: "Yes, my child, you owe our Lord a great deal. You understand this, and I count upon you." Another novice, who scarcely knew Mother Barat, came timidly on the eve of making her vows to be examined by her. After a few other questions: "Have you any means, my child?" the Mother General asked. "None at all," the novice answered shyly. "What can you do? Are you well-informed?" "Reverend Mother, I have no accomplishments, and I know next to nothing. I bring to the Society only many imperfections and good health." She was shyer than ever after this avowal, and scarcely ventured to raise her eyes, but when she did at last muster courage to look into Mother Barat's face, the smile upon her lips and her kind words completely reassured her. "That will do, my child; I am satisfied with this and your devotedness. You will work with us in humility. Be faithful, and rely on the affection of your Mother." A procuratrix once ventured to remonstrate with the Mother General on account of what seemed to her, her excessive liberality with regard to money. "Money!" repeated Mother Barat, vehemently, even starting in her chair in her indignant surprise. "When has money ever been made a difficulty in the Sacred Heart?" "I shall never forget that start of hers," said the person who had occasioned it.

There was, however, one human consideration which had its full weight in Mother Barat's mind with regard to the reception of postulants. She would not receive those who had a duty to discharge in their own homes. One who wished ardently to enter upon religious life, consulted Mother Barat as to the possibility of doing so at that time. Her answer was that she must remain with her father, whose age and infirmities made her presence necessary; later on she would join the Society. "And I shall assist at your clothing," Mother Barat added, with a smile. She remonstrated on the entrance of another, the eldest of nine children. "But, my dear child, does not your mother want your help at home? You must not leave her yet." "And it was only when I had made it clear that I was not needed, that she consented to receive me," says this religious.

Mother Barat's heart ached for the sorrow of fathers and mothers who gave up their dearest to her keeping, and she thanked them over and over again. But when, for worldly motives, they sacrificed their daughters' vocation, liberty, and happiness, nay, perhaps their salvation, she felt indignant at such selfishness and tyranny, pitied those who were its victims, and foretold family troubles, which too often overtook those who had thus set their will against that of God.

One or two instances of her extreme kindness to postulants remain on record. One religious writes:

I entered the noviceship with some of my former prejudices against the Society still clinging to me. I feared to find the Mothers "great ladies," who would look down on me. As soon as I was admitted to the Mother General's room I fell on my knees. Then, placing both hands on my head, she covered me with the cloak she had on, and gave me her blessing so fervently that I cannot express what I felt. She then raised me up kindly, and said: "My child, I give you Blessed John Berchmans for your model. Now go and make acquaintance with your Sisters in the noviceship." I was received as a child of the house. So cordial a welcome dispelled all my fears. It was evident that she had read my heart.

Another, who was on the point of leaving to return to the world, was brought to Mother Barat, who kissed her and only

said: "Ah, my child, if our Lord had refused to carry His Cross, what would have become of us?" From that moment the postulant was won to the life of the crucified Heart of Jesus.

I entered the Society of the Sacred Heart [another writes], prejudiced against it, attracted to it only by its name, and thinking a great deal of the Carmelites. I was told Mother Barat was coming, but I cared little enough for this, for I did not know her, and I took refuge behind a pillar in the church, to pray and cry undisturbed. Suddenly I felt some one pass; it was she. Had virtue gone out of her when her dress touched me? I cannot tell, but I know that I was immediately filled with veneration, and said to myself: "She is a saint. Here is the second volume of St. Teresa's Life." The impression never wore off, and the Sacred Heart was henceforth Carmel for me.

One familiar voice was never wanting to these early noviceships of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and Father Varin, now nearly seventy years of age, often came to the novices in the Rue Monsieur. He preached sometimes, with all his wonted energy, but more frequently he gathered all round him for familiar talk. He often dropped in unexpectedly, but all were at leisure for him, and a circle was quickly formed to hear him speak of God and of the Society. His salutation was still, as it had been of old: "How good God is!" and his words were by turns grave and gay, but always full of the dominant passion of his soul, the love of God, and tending always to increase this love in others. But in spite of his energy, Father Varin was growing old, and Mother Barat foresaw that the time was not far distant when she would lose the advantage of his care and teaching. She was thankful, therefore, to find in Father de Ravignan, who was also a frequent visitor at the Rue Monsieur, the kind interest in her work, which showed her the good that so consummate a master of the spiritual life was to effect, through many long years to come, for her communities.

CHAPTER XXXII

SIXTH GENERAL CONGREGATION. 1839–1840.

Joining a man's heart to a woman's thought. — 2. MACH. vii. 21.

NEARLY six years had elapsed since the last General Congregation, and when Mother Barat came back to Paris in 1838, she had given notice to the Society that she should summon the Mother Councillors in the following year. The place of meeting was, however, uncertain. Paris was disturbed, and it was more than likely that revolution might break out before long. Switzerland seemed preferable, but, on the whole, Rome combined most advantages in Mother Barat's opinion. On the 6th of February, 1839, she wrote: "I feel that the Society is on the eve of a crisis. May it survive, and emerge from the trial, purer as well as stronger. We must earnestly pray that this may be so." A few days later, she left Paris with Mother Desmarquest.

There were several reasons for Mother Barat's apprehensions regarding the future of the Society. The Constitutions had been put into form in 1815, but circumstances had changed so much since then, that a development was necessary. When they were framed, the Society possessed only six houses, and, in 1839, the number was forty. Mother Barat had hitherto visited all, either personally, or through one of her Assistants General, but this was no longer possible. There were some in the Society who hoped that, in effecting the necessary changes, the original plan might be so far modified as to assimilate the Constitutions more nearly to those of the Society of Jesus, but Mother Barat mistrusted such possibility. "It is thought,"

she wrote, "that women can be governed like men. The future will show whether this is so." She was not alone in her fears. Cardinal Odescalchi, the Vicar of Rome, said these words of warning, in 1836, to Mother Armande de Causans: "Beware what you do. Leave well alone. The founder's first inspiration bears God's stamp, and it is dangerous to tamper with it."

Foremost amongst the desired changes was the removal of the seat of the Society, that is, the Mother House and the general noviceship, to Rome. The reasons alleged were: (1) the insecurity caused by the political changes and agitation in France; (2) a certain prejudice which existed on the part of foreign Governments and even Bishops, against a religious Society, whose Superior General resided in Paris; (3) the guarantee that the near proximity of the Holy See would afford the Society, for the maintenance of the purity of its spirit. A great many of the religious were in favour of this step, and it was advocated by wise advisers, such as Fathers Varin, Rozaven, Loriquet, Barat, and Sellier, Mgr Parisis, Mgr, afterwards Cardinal de Reisach, and the Bishop of Strassburg. Mother Barat herself doubted between two courses. Rome was, as it were, the home of her soul, and she loved it more and more as time went on. Her devotion to the Holy See, her piety, and her taste for solitude would have led her to prefer it. "My greatest sacrifice," she said, some years later, to Mother Lehon, "is to live at a distance from you and the holy city." But personal considerations never weighed with her, and how could they do so now, when the good of the Society, and perhaps its whole future, was involved in her decision? But wherein did this good lie? Would its interests be furthered by her leaving France, once the cradle and still the chief centre of the activity of the Society, the home of its traditions, and the chief source of its fruitfulness? Would not the French Bishops and even the Government resent her leaving it, as a desertion? Many Bishops were of this opinion. In her perplexity and anguish of mind, a word from the Holy Father would have guided her choice, but he said nothing. "The Holy Father leaves me free," she had said previously.

"His Holiness understands that the seat of the Society must be in France, and, in spite of the opinion of those who differ from him, he holds firm." Likewise, in a letter of 1836, she wrote: "Do not be anxious about my stay in Rome; it will be only for a time. Our Holy Father the Pope has understood that the government of our Society must be kept in France."

With grave anxieties then, Mother Barat set out for Rome. She stopped on her way at Besançon, and from there went, by the passes of the Jura, still blocked with snow, to Montet. She pressed on to Rome in April, travelling *incognito*, not to give umbrage in her French houses, or arouse their fears or misgivings; but at Turin her secret was nearly divulged by her own charity. Her first question on arriving anywhere was whether there were any sick persons in the house, and at Turin she was told that there was some anxiety about the health of one of the children. She went up directly to the infirmary, and saw the sick child. "It is Madame Madeleine," she said, "come to bless you, dear child, in the name of our Lord." She made the sign of the Cross on the child's forehead, and the fever immediately abated. A few days later the invalid was convalescent, and said to her companions: "I have seen Madame Madeleine, a very kind lady, who came to give me her blessing. It was she who cured me."

On April 21st, she was in Rome, and on the 27th, she wrote to Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud: "Be full of courage, and of hope. Uphold the remnant of Israel, the time of trial for the Society will pass away.' To Mother Emilie Giraud she wrote: "Yes, dear Emilie, I shall again behold my French houses and my old companions. You will see your Mother again in this land of exile, if God prolongs her life. When the Society is organized, I shall have more time for my older daughters, and to encourage them to carry on the work of their perfection to their last breath. Let us do as the swan does, for they say he sings his sweetest when about to die. Such is the death of the saints. It is the purest, the most burning and most perfect act of love they ever made."

In May, Mother Barat convoked the Congregation, which

was to meet early in June. There was some difficulty in collecting the Mothers in sufficient numbers, and eventually only ten met instead of twelve. Mother Eugénie de Gramont never liked the Congregation being held in Rome, and it was thought imprudent for her to leave Paris at a time when danger threatened. Mothers Deshayes and Grosier obtained leave of absence on the score of age and infirmities. They were replaced by Mother Thérèse Maillucheau, who came from Nantes, and Mother Galitzin, the Secretary General. Mothers de Charbonnel, Desmarquest, Audé, Prevost, de Limminghe, Coppens, de Rozeville, and d'Olivier, Superior of Beauvais, completed the number.

Mother Barat rested her hope for the peaceful solution of difficulties upon the tried sincerity with which all sought simply the good of the Society. "It is easy to agree," she wrote in June to Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud, "when each one seeks God's interests and not her own. Personal pretensions spoil every thing. If we cling to humility, every thing will go well." "I cannot tell you," she said in a letter to Mother Eugénie de Gramont, "how persevering all were in prayer, and in the practice of religious virtues during the month the Congregation lasted, and also before it opened." This was the preparation on which she chiefly relied.

Two days after the first session, the favour of a private audience was granted to Mother Barat by Pope Gregory XVI., who had expressed a wish to see her. It lasted for three quarters of an hour, and Mother Prevost, who accompanied Mother Barat, said that throughout that time the Holy Father was listening with evident pleasure and interest to all that the Mother General was saying to him, and to her answers to his questions about the Society. He encouraged the Council to carry through the work it had in hand, but said nothing that could be taken as approval of any of its proposed measures.

The first change made was to relieve the Mother General of part of her burden, by dividing the Society into circumscriptions or provinces, governed by Mothers Provincial, whose duty it was to visit and direct the convents under their authority,

but subject to the control of the Superior General. The mode of renewal adopted for the council of twelve whose duty it was to elect the Superior General, having been found defective and irregular, was established on a sounder basis. There was no difference of opinion about the desirableness, of these two changes, corresponding to similar institutions in the Rules of the Society of Jesus. But some members of the Council, and amongst them, conspicuously, Mothers de Limminghe and Galitzin, were for pushing things further. The latter especially was now as warm an admirer of the Jesuits as, in old days, she had been their bitter foe, and her desire was to see the Constitutions of the Society to which she belonged, as like as possible to those of St. Ignatius. Her opinion on this point, combined with that of Mother de Limminghe, prevailed so far with the other members of the Council, that forty-six articles of the Constitutions were altered or suppressed. Amongst the modifications were : that the meetings of the Council General every six years were replaced by another assembly called a Congregation, which the Superior might convoke as occasion required ; that the time for the aspirantship before Profession was lengthened from five years to ten, that the lay-sisters were not to make the vow of Stability. The recitation of Office in choir was abolished in all houses except those of noviceship. But the most important of all the decisions was the one which removed the seat of the government of the Society from Paris to Rome, and it was this which, later on, excited most opposition.

On July 5th, the Congregation proceeded to the election of the Assistants General. Mothers de Charbonnel, Desmarquest, de Limminghe, and Galitzin were elected, and the latter retained the post of Secretary General.

On July 12th, Mother Barat and the Mother Councillors went from the Trinità to the Villa Lante, and there, in the garden, before a picture of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, Mother Barat solemnly consecrated the Society to the Queen of Martyrs, a fitting prelude to the time of trial that was now at hand. The prayer she made that day for herself and all, was that our Lady would obtain for them of her Son the deep

humility and the courage which raise the soul above sorrow, and enable us, like her true children, to stand calm and immovable at the foot of the Cross. *Stabat juxta crucem.* No one needed this grace as Mother Barat did, no one received it in such plenitude. The following day all the Mothers who had taken part in the Congregation had an audience of Gregory XVI., who blessed them and added to that blessing words of kind encouragement.

The Congregation then broke up, and Mother Barat despatched to each house a letter giving a summary of the new Decrees, and promising that a full account should follow. No mention of Rome was made in this summary. "The Superior General will, henceforward, have a fixed place of residence," were the words used in describing the Decree relating to the seat of the government of the Society. She wished to break the news herself to the French houses and soften the blow by her letters.

But ill-news proverbially flies fast, and there was nothing in the circular letter to dispel fears already rife. We find Mother Barat writing, on July 25th, to Mother Eugénie de Gramont: "Your grief, my Eugénie, goes to my heart, and it is not you alone, but your Mother also, who has to go apart to weep and pray. If it were not for the hope of meeting, I should not have courage to bear my exile. If our Lord wills that I should live in Rome, you yourself must come and rest here. You will close my eyes, and your old Mother will be comforted on her death-bed by breathing her last in the arms of the child who has been her consolation and support through life."

The Decrees were solemnly promulgated on September 8th, and Mother Barat, when she sent them, wrote a circular letter in which she sought to inspire all with that generous spirit in which she herself accepted sacrifice.

"Behold this is the acceptable time, behold this is the day of salvation" [she wrote]. "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the time of pruning is come." The vine that already bears fruit will be pruned, that it may produce in yet greater abundance. Does not

our Lord act thus with us when He asks us to make sacrifices, to submit to separations? He wills to disengage our hearts from all human affection; for what offering will one bring who has respect to persons, one who does not see our Lord alone in every one, when the Judge of all shall come? Chaff instead of wheat, clay instead of gold.

A few days earlier she had written to Mother de Rozeville: "If, by God's mercy, we become what we ought to be, the Society of the Sacred Heart will prove to the world that women, by the help of grace, can become manly in virtue. Between ourselves, this will be less difficult in an age like ours, when men might too often be taken for women."

But the energy and sweetness of Mother Barat's words were alike unheeded amidst the storm of excited feeling which the new Decrees had provoked. A trial such as this is never wanting in the history of great enterprises and of those who carry them through. Mother Barat met it and all the sorrow that came with it, with the serene fortitude that was the result of her great sanctity and unshaken trust in God. Opposition and contradiction, such as she now encountered, must have overcome her and proved fatal to the Society had she met them with mere human energy and determination. But she was in very truth nothing in her own eyes, and God was all; and for the four years that the trial lasted her intense hold of this truth enabled her to be in His Hands the means, not only of keeping the Society in existence, but of strengthening and perfecting it.

The first complaint came from Father Varin, although he was averse neither to the removal of the Mother House to Rome, nor to the closer approximation of the Rules to those of the Society of Jesus. But a rash hand had been laid upon what was to him the very Ark of the Covenant. Mother Galitzin, who, as Secretary General, drew up the official digest of the decisions of the Congregation, had ventured to remove from the first pages of the Plan of the Institute, the prologue stating that "the primary end of the Society is to *glorify the Sacred Heart of Jesus*," and had substituted for it the words taken from the Rule of St. Ignatius: "Its end is to consecrate itself *to the greater glory of God.*"

To make such a change was to touch Father Varin in the very apple of his eye, and it meant to him nothing less than the ruin of the foundations of the Society, whose object, end, and sole cause was the Sacred Heart. He wrote this to Mother Barat, and continued :

Do you wish me to prove it ? The proof is that your Congregation would not have existed but for the formal intention of labouring for the glory of the Divine Heart of Jesus by making It known and loved. . . . If you suppress this article there is but one thing to do, and that is to change the *name of the Society*. And if, nevertheless, you keep the name it will be still, perhaps, a Society of the Sacred Heart, but I shall not be able to say that it is that Society whose birth we witnessed thirty-nine years ago, which received you, you, the first into its lowly cradle, and whose development you have brought about in so admirable a manner. The name may remain, but as to the reality it is clear it exists no longer.

Before entering on the history of the strife that ensued, it will be well to remark that the immense majority of the members of the Society knew nothing of what was going on, and pursued their life of prayer and charity undisturbed. Those whose position or intercourse with the outside world obliged them to share the doubts and perplexities involved in the knowledge and discussion of the questions under dispute, suffered no breach of charity in their intercourse with one another. There was very wide divergence of opinion, but hearts were ever united.

Mothers Prevost, de Limminghe, de Charbonnel, and Coppens were, with Mother Galitzin, in favour of the Decrees, which were likewise received with satisfaction by all the houses outside French territory. With few exceptions they had been received at least with docility by the French houses. Mothers Grosier and Deshayes, whose seniority gave great weight to their opinion, looked sadly on changes, which seemed to them to substitute a new Society for the old, but the chief opposition came from the Hotel Biron. As Mother Barat had foreseen, Mgr de Quélen's residence at the Petit-Hôtel gave him paramount influence in the convent, and the spirit there was no

longer what it had been. Long ago Mother Barat had noted as a possible future danger, Mother de Gramont's tendency to yield to external influence against her better judgment, and she knew that there was also in her heart, in spite of her great virtue, an innate consciousness of the value of birth and position, which, like a secret enemy within the walls of a fortress, was ready to conspire with flattery from without. Mgr de Quélen's position, both in the great world and in the Church, was a very high one. The patronage of so eminent a prelate had been very advantageous to the school in point of numbers, but somehow there had crept into the establishment a certain depreciation of the humble Mother General, an inclination to disparage her authority. Moreover, the Archbishop, good and charitable as he was, had inherited Gallican principles, which made him suspicious of what were then known as "the encroachments of Rome," and therefore jealous of Religious Orders in immediate dependence upon the Holy See. Thus it came about that in spite of their affection for Mother Barat, and in perfect good faith, Mothers Eugénie de Gramont and Aimée d'Avenas, the Superior and Mistress General, were to deepen her experience of the acuteness of suffering inflicted by those most dearly loved.

Mgr de Quélen then was opposed to the new Decrees, and using his authority as Archbishop of Paris, he addressed to the Holy See a protest which was supported by the Bishops of Le Mans, Tours, Poitiers, Orleans, and Beauvais. These prelates also, under the influence of the prejudices of an age gone by, were displeased that a Congregation which was effecting much good in their dioceses should be, as they imagined, more withdrawn from their control, and holding more immediately from Rome and the Society of Jesus. Mgr Mathieu, at that time Archbishop of Besançon, had long been confessor of the Paris convent. He was devoted to the Society, and wrote Mother Barat a long letter, examining each point of the new Rules, and not concealing the disastrous effects which he foresaw the changes would produce upon many of his colleagues in the episcopate. According to him the conflict

was likely to become the most serious affair of the Church of France.

The Jesuits, like every one else, were divided on the question. Fathers Rozaven, Sellier, Barat, and Loriquet approved the work of the General Congregation, whilst the Provincial of France, Father Renault, held that the Rule of the Society of Jesus was too hard for women, and that in adopting it the religious of the Sacred Heart were undertaking what was beyond their strength. Father Roothan, the General, feared that the change of the centre of the Society from Paris to Rome would indispose the French Government towards the Society of the Sacred Heart, and that the blame would fall on the French Jesuits. He forbade them therefore to interfere in the question.

The same divergence of opinion prevailed even amongst the friends of the Society who formed part of the Court of Rome. The Protector, Cardinal Pedicini, was in favour of the Decrees. Cardinal Lambruschini, who knew more of the state of opinion in France, feared the worst from their effects. Mother Barat had recourse to the Sovereign Pontiff. "The will of the Holy See will always steer our course," she said; "but as the new Decrees had not yet been presented for canonical sanction, the Holy Father made her no reply.

In justice to Mother Barat's daughters it must be remarked that their greatest grievance against her was that she had placed herself at a distance from them. Mother Aglaë Fontaine, Superior at Autun, wrote to her: "I would accept the other changes, but the prospect of your residence in Rome simply crushes me, and I cannot face it without terror. What a misfortune it is for your French houses where your presence did so much good. For us, your old children, the cross is heavy indeed, and the change very hard."

On September 6th, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Eugénie de Gramont:

> You make yourself too unhappy about my stay in Rome, Believe me it is but an experiment, and if it should not prove favourable to the interests of the Society, I would abandon it readily. [And four

days later she wrote :] If it is clearly proved that the choice of another place for the fixed residence of the Superior General would be more advantageous to the Society, who would resist? Certainly not your Mother, who only consented to the change as a matter of duty, and in order not to refuse the Sacred Heart the greatest sacrifice she could make. Do you think [she wrote to Mother d'Avenas], that I wish to be absolute, to come to no understanding with such good daughters, and not to yield to the argument of the greatest good if I am shown where it lies? No, certainly not, that would be against my character and my resolutions.

We wished to do what was for the best [she wrote to Mother Eugénie], and undoubtedly, if it were proved that any one of the Decrees was injurious, no one of us would cling to it, believe me. When you have read the documents that will be sent to you, and when you have heard Mother de Charbonnel's account of it all, you will, I am sure, be less prejudiced against it. In the meantime we will both pray, and I am confident that our Lord will not allow that upright hearts, which seek His glory, should be deceived to their own cost, at least in things that would endanger the salvation of souls.

When, a month later, news of the intended protest of the Bishops had reached Mother Barat, she wrote to Mother Eugénie :

You ought to have obtained a delay. Some weeks would have been enough to enlighten the Archbishop, and spare him this grief, for I know his noble and compassionate heart. I am certain that he will not be indifferent to my great sorrow : it is doubled because it comes from him. I might at least have expected a word of warning before this uprising against us, for, dear Eugénie, you have known me for many long years ; you know that I am not obstinate, that I easily yield to reason. I have other faults, alas, which prevent me from feeling any vanity at not having those from which God has been good enough to preserve me. And so I wish to let you know that from what you say, and on account of your wish, I have put off presenting the Decrees for approbation. You urge me to return to France in the spring, and I was already asking leave to do so. You see I had entered into your views, and was willingly doing what seemed to me reasonable, namely, that we should come to an understanding, and be of one mind, because it was never my wish, believe me, to impose laws and obligations against the conscience and the will of the greater number of those who compose the Society. You

will understand from this, how grieved I must be at learning what is taking place in Paris, and to hear that you do not prevent measures, which will make every one think we are disunited, whereas each one of us would willingly sacrifice every thing rather than give so sad an example, one, moreover, already too frequently given, and which the Society of the Sacred Heart should never even seem to offer to the Church.

You may differ from us in opinion [she wrote in another letter], but your heart, your duty, will raise you above the points on which we disagree. I rely on Mother de Gramont, as I do on myself [she wrote to another]. The links by which the Sacred Heart of Jesus has bound us to His Divine service are indissoluble.

To Mother Grosier, who, when giving utterance to her dislike to the new Decrees, expressed the fear of injuring their long tried friendship, she said: "Dismiss any such notions, dear Henriette; such fears are quite groundless. Our affection is based on the corner-stone which is Jesus Christ, and no human power will ever be able to weaken it. You can say any thing and every thing; I shall never doubt your love for your Mother and for the Society, for which I am making just now the most costly sacrifice I could make, that of living at a distance from you."

Whatever she suffered there was to be no recrimination: she alone was to bear the brunt of the storm. Some one laid the blame of the obnoxious measures on Father Rozaven, and she wrote indignantly: "It is a calumny. So unjust a reproach was wholly undeserved by this venerable man, who has laboured so strenuously, and with such fruit for religion. He simply drew up the articles in question. Complaints should be launched against me alone. I am the only one to blame, and if I was mistaken in acting as I did, at any rate I, and many others with me, thought we were working towards our greater perfection."

But as she thus turned the point of all the arrows against herself, she suffered intensely. "Dear Emilie," she wrote in October, 1839, to Mother Emilie Giraud, "say some fervent prayers for your Mother, whose want of virtue makes her spend very sad nights. I may well say: 'I have children who

keep me awake,' but it is with the Cross, and this thought softens the blows, for it is a joy to suffer." To Mother de Rozeville she wrote: "Till now the Society could be guided like a flock of sheep. Whoever carried the shepherd's crook was obeyed on that account. How sad it would be if the flock ceased to obey it! Our Lord loves simplicity so much. . . . How the God of all goodness tries us! Is it not time for me to begin once for all to become a true religious of the Sacred Heart? A few years more, and the day of reckoning with the great Judge will come. . . . Pray then that these years of suffering may weigh in the scale against those I have spent so ill."

St. Vincent of Paul used to inculcate the maxim, that we should give in to others as far as we can without offence to God and our neighbour, and such was always Mother Barat's rule. It was in this spirit that she agreed to the request made by Mother Eugénie de Gramont and others, that experimental trial should be made of the Decrees for a certain length of time before they were presented for the approbation of the Holy See. However reasonable this concession was, however conciliatory and large-minded, it was unpalatable to those who were for carrying things through with a high hand, and Mother Barat's wise and considerate kindness was looked upon as weakness. Mother Galitzin, whose tendency to be autocratic had been fostered by the education she had received, wrote: "It was in vain that the Assistants implored the Superior General to act with firmness towards the Paris house: it was not possible to persuade her, so much did she fear to extinguish the still smoking flax."

In November, appeared the circular letter in which Mother Barat announced that the Decrees would be put into practice, and submitted to trial for three years. "If at the end of that time," she said, "it is found that certain changes have been injurious to the Society, as I certainly wish nothing but its prosperty (for which I would give a thousand lives, if I had them), I will not refuse to convoke a fresh General Congregation to remedy the evils brought to light by experience.

If however, as I am confident, the wisdom and utility of the measures adopted are recognized, at the end of these three years we will apply for the solemn approbation of the Holy See."

The day this circular letter appeared, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Prevost:

Your reflections, dear Mother, came to add to the long list of protests, objections, and complaints which each post brings me. They were of course all the more painful as coming from you, but a few minutes' recollection changed what was bitter into sweetness. I have so much to expiate in my long and laborious government of the Society. Is it not a signal grace that, near the end of my life and the close of my mission, God allows me to glean from it only thorns and briers? He has right and reason on His side, and wishes me to count on Him alone. I can only thank you then, dear Mother, for helping me to plunge into this path, which, so long as it is for the glory of God, has for so many years been the object of my desires. I leave it to Him to justify my conduct, if He wills to do so; my part is to be silent and to pray for all. Believe me, I pray fervently for you.

Mother Barat spent the whole winter of 1839, and the spring and summer of 1840, at the Villa Lante, suffering and praying, and daily growing more familiar with the ways of God. "I thank our Lord," she wrote, "for the knowledge He gives me of persons and things. Would that, if He grants me strength, I might profit by it to redouble my zeal, and engrave in souls, with an iron style, obedience, forgetfulness of self-interest, the glory of the Sacred Heart at our own expense. We shall do nothing lasting without these."

The death of Mgr de Quélen, which took place on the last day of the year 1839, was a reason in the eyes of Mother Eugénie de Gramont for postponing the execution of the Decrees until the appointment of a new Archbishop. The delay gave rise to unpleasant rumours of disaffection, and it became more and more urgent, as time went on, that Mother Barat should return to France. Father Varin begged her to do so, and wrote in April, 1840: "What is happening to this dear Society of the Sacred Heart? I dare not ask myself this question, because I have not courage to answer. What has

become amongst us of the precious peace, which our Divine Master bought for us at so great a price, which He left us on the eve of His Death, and which, after His Resurrection, He came again to put into our possession? *Pax vobis.* For my own part I have but one thing to do: adore, submit, and pray."

Until the time should come for her return, Mother Barat sent various messages to Paris to explain the Decrees, and prepare the way for their being carried out. In the course of 1840, it was decided that Mother Galitzin should go to America, a favour which her ardour for the foreign missions had often led her to implore. The visit of an Assistant General was desirable, and Mother Galitzin was the only one able to undertake so long a journey. Before she left Europe she was to visit Paris, in order to present the new Decrees to Mgr Affre, and at the same time, she was to try to arrange matters at the Rue de Varenne. The latter work she set about with more zeal than discretion, and her action had not the desired conciliatory effect. Mother de Charbonnel's good offices had likewise failed to produce much result, and every one said Mother Barat's presence was the only hope. She wrote on July 12th, to Mother Galitzin in Paris:

Our affairs are a very grave anxiety. Whilst you urge me to defer leaving Rome, I hear from Paris that they are most anxious that I should come. Still, I stay where I am, although Father Rozaven also wishes me to set out. I am waiting until I hear from you the result of your interview with Mgr Affre. What a difficult position I am in! I am dragged in two ways, and am equally afraid either to go or to stay. I know that I should be more at ease in my mind if I set out, because duty alone would prompt that step. It would be going to meet the Cross, for all I hear has very little consolation in it, and makes me fear vils in store. Let us pray more fervently than ever. I rely on Our Lady of Loretto. It seems to me that the Sacred Heart inspires me to have recourse to her.

The kindness with which Mgr Affre, the new Archbishop of Paris, received Mother Barat's communications, decided her to leave Rome, and she began her journey to France in 1840. She stayed four days at Loretto, where a small

foundation had lately been made, and from there went on to Pignerol, where Sister Elizabeth was dying. Mother Barat spent two hours alone with her, but no record of what passed remains to us. She was dying in a joy and consolation that no words could describe. Her only sorrow—if such a thing could be said—was that she was too happy. "This is not what I asked for," she exclaimed to our Lord. "I wanted to suffer, and you know why." With her last breath she said that eternity would not be long enough for her to express her gratitude for what Mother Barat had done for her. "It was love that consumed her," Mother Barat said. "Even in her agony it was all one transport of delight. . . . She had given every thing. She had followed Jesus Christ, humbled, poor, and crucified. That is the true way, the shortest and safest. Let us pray that we may understand it." "I often invoke her," she wrote afterwards, "and I feel that from the bosom of her Divine Spouse she sends me help. I cannot get over her loss."

On her way through Italy, Mother Barat stopped at Parma, where she joined the community in the midst of their *villegiatura* at Talignano. During her stay there, she liked to walk up to the hill, where the flocks of cattle and sheep were grazing, and even to take for an hour the place of the Sister in charge. One morning, she asked a shepherd boy to let her keep his flock while he went to serve Mass. "It helped me to make a meditation," she said afterwards, "for I thought of our Lord, the true Shepherd, and when I found the trouble I had in keeping my sheep together, I said to Him: 'How I pity Thee, my Lord, for having to do with bad and rebellious sheep like me.'" From Parma she wrote to Mother de Gramont: "I am longing to see you, dear Eugénie. I cannot believe that when we have met and can explain things, we shall be long divided in opinion, we who are one in every thing else. . . . I am praying for it, and cannot help hoping that we shall be again as before."

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE NEW DECREES. 1840–1842.

What? Is there then no space for golden mean
And gradual progress? Twilight leads to day,
And e'en within the burning zones of earth
The haziest sunrise yields a temperate ray;
The softest breeze to fairest flowers gives birth;
Think not that Prudence dwells in dark abodes,
She scans the future with the eye of gods.

WORDSWORTH.

MOTHER BARAT wrote from Paris to Mother Audé on September 31st, 1840: "I arrived in this great, bustling town the day before yesterday. On both sides, the first meetings were painful, and I foresee that what is to come will be so also, but it was high time I should be here, and I regret more and more not having done what I felt to be necessary. It is too late now; we must repair by suffering. Our Lord is there; let us trust Him." The following day, she wrote to Mother Galitzin in America: "There are great trials ahead of us; a mass of confusion to unravel. If I did not rely on help from our Lord, how I should fear! Pray, then, pray. I have begun nothing yet. I look on, listen, pray, and get prayers."

The first weeks in Paris were spent at the Rue Monsieur, amongst the novices. Early in October, they made their retreat, which ended on the feast of St. Teresa, and after this, Mother Barat, who had taken part in it with them, left for the Rue de Varenne. Until her arrival, one excuse after another had been urged to postpone putting the new Decrees into practice. First, it was the death of the Archbishop, then respect for his memory; after this, came the nomination of his

successor, and the necessity of knowing his will on the matter. However, when the Superior General had taken up her abode at the Hotel Biron, delay was of course impossible, and it was with much grave anxiety that she took this necessary step. "God shakes the little tree of the Society," she wrote to Mother Galitzin on October 28th, "as the wild winds of winter shake the forest trees. Those that are firmly rooted stand all the firmer, but how many are blown down!"

Her first care was to revive and renew in the hearts of all that true love of God which is the source of sacrifice, of union, and of peace, and whilst she was doing this, her example, her calm, and her kindness were working their own effects in the hearts of her daughters. "All tell me," she wrote to Mother Audé, "that if I had brought the Decrees myself, there would have been no opposition." And she wrote at the end of November: "We are in peace here; my little mission gets on slowly, but it does get on. All the Decrees are now in force in this house." There was a dark little recess in the chapel at the Hotel Biron, which was always a favourite place of Mother Barat's for prayer. It was between the sacristy and the altar, and there, during this visit, she spent all the time she could spare from her work, praying and weeping unseen, as long ago she had prayed and wept unseen in the tribune at Amiens. The anguish of that time was renewed now, but there were elements of crushing sorrow in the present trial that were wanting in the former.

At the beginning of her visit to the Rue de Varenne, she was well, and wrote of this improvement to Mother Grosier, quoting, *à propos* of her renewed strength, the words: "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." But the trial was too great for one so frail, and disturbed nights added their weary hours to the days of pain. The neighbourhood of the Hotel Biron was kept in a state of constant excitement by the festivities consequent on the interment of the remains of Napoleon I. in the Church of the Invalides, and the ominous sound of the *Marseillaise* startled her from sleep almost every night. "When I first hear it, I imagine I am twelve or thirteen

years old," she wrote to Mother de Limminghe, "see how evil lives on, whilst good so quickly passes from us." And to Mother Galitzin she wrote: "I fear that a hidden fire is smouldering beneath these ashes of the illustrious dead, and that some day it will burst forth." On December 15th, she went back to the Rue Monsieur, where she almost immediately fell very ill, and for several months fever seldom left her. In March, 1841, during one of the intervals of respite, she wrote to Mother Audé: "I assure you, dear Eugénie, our Lord has brought me back to life, only to give me heavy crosses to bear; but now (at the end of Lent) I must not be so cowardly as to say 'Enough.' I do not venture to pray for more, like St. Francis Xavier, but at least I resign myself. If I were the only one to suffer, I might desire it, but the Society is shaken to its foundations, and it is impossible to me to love this Cross."

She had come back to France with the intention of visiting all the houses, but her illness made this impossible. In a circular letter, dated June 16th, 1841, she said:

As the Cross was to open my mission amongst you, I thank our Lord for that which He has vouchsafed me. It has enabled me in my long solitude to pray for you, and, as my poor labours were interrupted, I was able to recommend your needs to God in prayer. Thanks to His goodness, I shall soon begin my work again; if it is not without difficulty, it will be at least with the zeal and affection, which I have always placed at your service. Although I have not been able by personal inspection to judge of the state of the Society, I am under no misapprehension as to its needs, the critical position in which it is, and the dispositions of several of its members. The enemy of all good has laboured, not without some success, to trouble the beautiful harmony that reigned in this family so dear to the Heart of Jesus.

She then pointed out certain virtues which, if practised exactly, would strengthen the Society, perfect it, and consequently make it more fit to attain its two-fold end, the perfection of its members and the salvation of souls, by procuring the greater glory of the Sacred Heart.

Soon afterwards, she left Paris with Mother Desmarquest to visit all the houses of which Mother Eugénie de Gramont was Provincial. She began with Amiens, and found every thing in a satisfactory condition. "It is indeed the cradle of the Society," she wrote, on June 26th, to Mother de Rozeville. "I rely on this dear flock to help me to strengthen the Society in its true spirit, which is faith, obedience, detachment, zeal for souls, recollection, prayer. This is the true baptism of water and the Holy Ghost, without which all dries up and withers."

Lille and Jette were treading in the same path. At Beauvais there had been a change of Superiors, and all was well. Mother Barat wrote in August to Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud: "We have much to be thankful for, if our Lord had not come to our help every thing might have gone against us." Lastly, summing up, as it were, the fruits of her visit, she wrote of it to Mother Audé:

Our visit to the houses in the northern Province has been a great consolation; religious and children belong heart and soul to the Society, and the tone is excellent. The Paris house is improving very much in this respect. Gentleness and patience are more efficacious than force and anger; why not act on these principles, which are in reality those our Lord has taught us?

All is calming down by degrees [she wrote to America]. Every one is doing her utmost for the good of the Society, and this makes me hope our Lord will continue to bless it. For your guidance I have but one piece of advice to give you. Cling to the trunk of the tree, whatever is said or done. We shall always be of one mind, for *my pilot will be Peter*, the Vicar of Jesus Christ. We can never make a mistake while we steer in that course, and it is better to die than ever to leave it.

These words were written to a young religious, Mother Aloysia Hardey, who made them the watchword of her life. She was destined to carry on Mother Duchesne's work in America, and reap a hundredfold for the Society from the seed she had planted.

The three years fixed upon to try the effect of the new Decrees were drawing to a close, and Mother Barat felt

strongly urged to return to Rome, that her action with regard to them might be inspired by the Holy See. She left Paris in September, and after staying for awhile at Chambéry, Turin, Parma, and Loretto, arrived in the middle of November at the Trinità.

Grief awaited her here, but a grief that had no bitterness. Mother Eugénie Audé, who for the last two years had been Superior of that house, was very ill, and it was feared she would not survive until November. However, for four months after Mother Barat's arrival she lingered on. The will of God had kept her at a distance during life, except at rare intervals, from her Superior General, whom she loved with so devoted an affection, but during these last months she had the happiness of seeing Mother Barat constantly at her side, and it was her hand that closed her eyes when, in March, 1842, she gave up her soul to God. "She died like a saint, in all resignation, confidence, and the most perfect peace," Mother Barat wrote to Mother d'Avenas. As Mother Audé's death left the Trinità without a Superior, she took that charge upon herself, and laboured not only for the good of those within its walls, but for those outside. It was a time of special graces in Rome. Father de Ravignan had preached there a course of Advent sermons, which had produced great fruit, and the good done was confirmed by the effect of the apparition of our Lady to the learned Jew, afterwards the famous Father Ratisbonne, which resulted in his conversion to the faith, and his vocation to the priesthood and to religious life.

A retreat was given for ladies at the Trinità and numerously attended by foreigners, as well as Italians, many of whom saw and talked to Mother Barat. "When the world lifts up a corner of its curtain," she wrote, "what misery we find it hides. Nothing but the love of the Sacred Heart would make me look through that chink," and then she wished she was like Mother Desmarquest, who, not knowing the language, was unable to converse with the Italians. "If I had been able to foresee the future, when I was a child," she added, "I should have refused to learn anything, and then I should have been a lay-sister.

This is a vain regret, I know, and the only thing left is to make the best of my position by using the opportunities it gives me to suffer and to love." Plans for the future and for the good of the Society always filled her mind. In the little journal which she kept at this time we find the following entry for February 12th, 1842: "Visit of Cardinal Lambruschini, the Secretary of State. He is in favour of my return to France, and told me he would ask the Holy Father what he thought about it. He did so the following day, and sent his private secretary the same evening to inform me of what Gregory XVI. had said. These are his *own words:* 'The Superior General ought to return to France, and make it her ordinary place of residence. She can come back to Rome from time to time to visit her houses, and maintain closer and more intimate relations with the Holy See.'

"I consulted the Cardinal at the same time as to where we ought to assemble for the General Congregation which will soon be held, and he answered unhesitatingly that it should be in France and not elsewhere, to meet the wishes of the French Bishops. He named Lyons as the most suitable place."

Acting in accordance with this advice, Mother Barat arranged every thing with her councillors, and issued a circular letter to prepare the way for the forthcoming Congregation. The letter is dated February 21st, and after reminding all to whom it is addressed of the value and excellence of union and charity, the special mark by which our Lord's disciples were to be known, the motto of the Society of the Sacred Heart, she goes on to say, that love of this virtue is not enough, it must be practised, and that the practice required renewal at that moment in the Society.

Light clouds [she said], though raised with good intentions, have dimmed its lustre, and the shadows that they cast have produced some bad effect, though hearts are still united. The remedy is prepared, and the time is nearly come to apply it. It is to convoke the General Congregation in which the Decrees will be re-examined, and adopted or rejected, according to the plurality of votes. If every one comes with her mind unbiassed and willing to sacrifice any thing and every thing

to the union and good of the Society, all clouds will disperse, and it will be easy to improve upon the past and re-establish the uniformity which is so much to be desired.

After some further passages full of wisdom and energy, she quotes our Lord's words: "I am the vine; you the branches." "This doctrine," she added, "should be the type of our union; the closer and purer it is, the more it will bind us interiorly to Jesus Christ, and the more free and the more abundant will be our participation in the Divine sap of His grace. May He then prune and remove whatever is of nature; we consent to it with the whole extent of our will; but let us ask Him that never may there be found amongst us any dead or dying branches, doomed for this reason to be cut off and cast away from the vine of the Sacred Heart." On February 18th, Mother Barat announced to Mother Galitzin that, following the advice received, it was her intention to return to France about the month of July, and to hold the Congregation there. She advised her to set off as soon as possible to assist at it.

I beseech our Lord [she wrote] to fill your mind with His: much prudence, moderation, peace. We ought to set this example to all. If on both sides this had been understood from the first, I should have been spared a great many sorrows. It is done now. We must buy our experience and bear the Cross, and if every thing "works together for good to him who loves God," may we not hope that these contradictions will be very useful to the Society? This will be if we are wise, and, above all, if each day we grow in the love of our Lord.

I excuse Mother Galitzin for every thing you blame her for [she wrote about the same time]. She went too quickly, I admit, but we were all pressed for time, so I must take her part. Which of us did not act with the best intentions! We must forgive and forget amongst ourselves, and do better now. . . .

It was only imprudence on her part [she said to Mother de Rozeville]; her heart is true to the Society, only we are learning by experience. Oh, my child, what sorrows I foresee still in store! But what do I care for sufferings, if we can save the Society. *May I die that it may live;* this is my motto. Did not our Lord act thus in dying to save us? I was deeply touched by what your words say.

Yes, I rely on your confidence, on your affection. I shall soon see you, and we can then talk it all over. It is a comfort to me that you have understood that the salvation of the Society will be the fruit of the union of all, and especially of union with your first Mother, whose only desire—at least I think so—is the glory of our Lord.

At the beginning of June, Mother Barat announced that the Congregation would open at Lyons, on July 26th. She concluded thus the letter of convocation : "When I write out the list of the old familiar names of those who are invited, the very depths of my soul are filled with consolation and the sweetest hope ; I can no longer doubt of the success of this important meeting, and of the prosperity of the Society. The closest union and uniformity of Rules will place it on a solid and lasting basis. Such is our hope ; it depends on you, dear Mothers, to realise it."

Before she left Rome, Mother Barat had a farewell audience of Pope Gregory XVI. When giving his blessing for her journey and the General Congregation, he said with great kindness that he hoped to see her again. "You have had a trying time, I know," he said ; "but our Lord has blessed and will bless every thing." Then, signing her with the sign of the Cross, he repeated, "Yes, everywhere and always *Cor unum et anima una.*" "Ah, Holy Father," Mother Barat answered, "those are the words engraved on our cross," and she might have added they were the words she was striving at any cost to engrave upon the hearts of her daughters.

CHAPTER XXXIV

LYONS. 1842–1843.

Stronger than steel
Is the sword of the spirit,
Swifter than arrows
The light of the truth is!
Greater than anger
Is love and subdueth!

LONGFELLOW.

MOTHER BARAT arrived at Lyons on July 22nd, and was soon joined by all the Mother Councillors. It was a numerous assembly. Besides the Assistants General, there were the Provincials and Vice-Provincials, several local Superiors, and a professed from each province. Mother Galitzin came from America, bringing Mother Aloysia Hardey who, a born and bred American, had, at fifteen years of age, entered the noviceship at Grand-Coteau, in Louisiana, and was now making her first personal acquaintance with the Society in France, and with its foundress, with whom, however, she had long been in correspondence. At this time, though scarcely over thirty, she had been Superior for some years, and was giving promise of great things to come. One dear and familiar face was wanting; Mother Henriette Grosier died in Paris on July 28th. "What doubles my sacrifice," Mother Barat wrote three days later to Mother Eugénie de Gramont, "is that I could not see her once again to say good-bye." Then, in envy of her lot, she added that to restore peace to the Society, she would be very happy to join those who were already at rest.

Mother Eugénie de Gramont had delayed her arrival, alleging — with only too good reason — the opposition of the Archbishop to her departure from Paris. When we speak of Mgr Affre, the picture rises before us of the heroic pastor of a turbulent flock, who risked his life to save theirs, and met death at their hands as the reward of his self-devotion. At this juncture of Mother Barat's life, he comes before us in a less favourable light. Although directly after his appointment to the See of Paris, he had received graciously the communications which she made him, his mind was deeply imbued with prejudices against the Society of Jesus, and he included the Society of the Sacred Heart in the same disfavour. As soon as he heard of the convocation of the General Congregation at Lyons, he looked on the proposed measure as an attempt to withdraw the Society from his authority, and he wrote a severe letter to the Superior General, affirming that the convocation of the assembly anywhere but in the Mother House, of which he claimed to be the Superior, was an irregular proceeding, and that he absolutely prohibited any deliberations to be held elsewhere on the Constitutions and the affairs of the Society in general. He wrote, at the same time, to all the Bishops of France who had convents of the Sacred Heart in their dioceses, to notify to them the opposition he felt called upon to make to the assembly at Lyons, as well as to the changes introduced by the Decrees of 1839. Twenty-two Bishops signified to him their adhesion to his views.

Mother Barat, in her answer, laid before the Archbishop, with the utmost respect, the reasons that had led to the course upon which she had entered, and she quoted from the Constitutions the passages referring to the convocation of the General Congregations, showing, beyond doubt, that she had their authority for what she had done. However, as the Archbishop maintained his prohibition, she had no resource but to refer the matter to Rome, where a Commission of eight Cardinals was immediately appointed to give a prompt answer to her petition for guidance. Whilst these negotiations were pending, Mother Barat took advantage of the presence of

the Mother Councillors to arrange that all should follow the exercises of the retreat given by Father Barrelle, S.J., at *Les Anglais*, the country house near Lyons, which Madame de la Barmondière had given to the school she had founded at the Rue Boissac. "I never heard such a retreat," Mother Barat said long afterwards. "It seemed as if special light had been given to the preacher, to meet the needs of those who listened to him." And she wrote as soon as it was over: "I care little what I suffer. I will say: *Amplius*, if God will save the Society." And two days later: "Let us save the Society in the crisis through which it is passing. There is only one remedy: union. Even if it should cost us our lives, we must spare nothing to bring it about." The help the retreat had given her was to prepare her for further sacrifice. At its close, Cardinal de Bonald, Archbishop of Lyons, regretfully signified to Mother Barat that he could not authorize her to hold the assembly in his diocese, against the will of the Archbishop of Paris. There was no choice, therefore, but to adjourn the Congregation, and when we remember what hopes Mother Barat had founded on it, we can form some little idea of what her disappointment was. Moreover, Cardinal de Bonald had imposed absolute silence upon her as to the cause of this indefinite adjournment. The prohibition had, therefore, to be kept secret from all, and again she had to bear the whole responsibility of what may have seemed to many an arbitrary measure.

At the end of August, therefore, the Mothers withdrew, each one to the house whence she had come. About the same time Mother Barat received the answer from Rome. A Papal Brief had been addressed to Cardinal Pedicini on August 16th, and a duplicate copy forwarded to Mgr Affre informed him that without prejudice to his authority, and that of the other bishops over the convents in their dioceses, his quality as Archbishop of Paris gave him no special rights or jurisdiction over the Society as a whole.

The Cardinal Protector sent this document to Mother Barat, urging her to communicate it to all the Superiors of the

Society, and through them to their Bishops. He advised her to invite Mother de Gramont once more to Lyons. By an unfortunate mistake the Cardinal's instructions were not despatched with the Brief, and only arrived in September after the assembly had broken up. Monseigneur Affre received the Brief with submission, but was much wounded by what he viewed as a misinterpretation of the motives on which he had acted. He expressed this in a letter dated September 16th, 1842, in which he said that the only right he had claimed was that to which he conceived himself entitled as bishop of the metropolitan house of the Society. He testified complete submission to the Pope's decision, and concluded by expressing his regret at the very serious difficulties that he foresaw were awaiting the Superior General and her council, since, as he alleged, according to the tenor of the Brief, he was no longer able to interfere in favour of the Society when the government applied to him, as was customary, with regard to new foundations, or any other matter concerning it. This last passage threatened a fresh and dangerous complication of affairs.

The meeting of the Congregation had been adjourned *sine die* and, early in September, Mother Barat left Lyons with Mother Desmarquest for Besançon. Her action was censured by some, and approved by others, but except for its consequences to souls she cared little for human praise or blame. "Mother Desmarquest and I were very silent on the journey," she wrote to Mother de Limminghe. "We were weighed down by sorrow. The day was stormy; every thing combined to increase our sadness."

The apprehensions that weighed so heavily upon Mother Barat were too soon justified; for a fresh storm was lowering that threatened to sweep all before it.

In consequence of steps taken with regard to a new foundation at Laval, the Minister of Justice and of worship, Monsieur Martin *(du Nord)*, was informed by the Archbishop of Paris of the recent changes in the Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and especially of the transference

of the seat of the government of the Society to Rome. Rumours of this reached Mother Barat, but vague as they were she took alarm, and determined to have recourse to the light and experience of Mgr Mathieu, Archbishop of Besançon, whose friendship for her and the Society was of long standing, and who was held in high repute both at Paris and in Rome. She was not disappointed, and from that time forward his help never failed her. The spirit in which it was given may be judged from the following letter written from Paris, and dated October 8th, 1842 :

I face the fact that I may suffer by my endeavours to help you in circumstances so complicated and so awkward ; but allow me whilst sharing your cross to feel a little of its weight. Simon of Cyrene was happy at having something to suffer on the road to Calvary. . . . The present storm shows you what prosperity is, for it is the prosperity of your Society which endangers its existence, and Providence seems to be giving you a lesson in humility. Therefore this Cross must be accepted and borne with great calm, great sweetness, religious silence, and perfect confidence.

From Besançon, Mother Barat went to Autun. A few words written there to Mother Galitzin give us an insight into her thoughts. The letter to which these lines were the answer repeated many accusations brought against her for weakness and partiality, and especially for having dismissed the Mother Councillors. "My answer to your long letter will be short. It is the fruit of my meditation this morning ; the subject was our Lord before Herod. I am not thinking of applying this to myself, only I wish to imitate our Lord in His silence. *Jesus autem tacebat.* I go no further than these three words, in which I find all strength and consolation."

It was whilst she was still at Autun, that things came to a crisis. Monsieur Martin wrote on October 17th, to the Archbishop of Paris to say, amongst other things, that as the Statutes of the Society of the Sacred Heart, presented for royal sanction in 1827, named Paris as the residence of the Superior General, he considered the transference of her residence to Rome as a violation of these Statutes. He threatened,

unless the Society returned immediately to the exact fulfilment of this fundamental condition, to apply the law of May 24th, 1825, the penalties attaching to which were the dissolution of the Society, the prohibition to teach, and the sale of the convents for hospitals and other charitable institutions. He complained of the recent appeal to Rome, and begged the Archbishop to transmit these observations to the Superior General to obtain explicit statements concerning them.

Under these circumstances the only advisable course seemed to Mother Barat to be that she should go to Paris, and treat by word of mouth with Mgr Affre, but the Mothers Assistant saw only danger in such a proceeding. A letter from Cardinal Pedicini increased her difficulties. He looked on the adjournment of the General Congregation as showing want of submission to authority, and together with this expression of displeasure, he sent Mother Barat a series of questions, which he required her to answer categorically in order to justify her conduct. She wrote immediately to throw further light upon the question, and awaited the answer at Autun.

Mgr Mathieu, who had been in Paris, came to Autun at the end of October on purpose to urge Mother Barat to delay no longer her journey thither. He took upon himself all responsibility with regard to Rome, and promised to write there himself, and explain every thing. This cleared the way before her, and, on November 2nd, she left Autun and returned to the Mother House with Mother Desmarquest. The nuncio, Mgr Garibaldi called on her at once to assure her from His Holiness, that she had done well to return. The friends of the Society all felt that it was a question of life and death.

Well might Mother Barat compare herself at this time to the chariot described by Ezechiel, drawn in opposite directions by the four living creatures. "I should never have believed it," she said, "but it is true, that until they have passed *per ignem*, that is through the furnace of God's love or the fire of Purgatory, the saints find it very hard to be of one mind." Mgr Affre, though cold and hard by nature, was too upright not to appreciate Mother Barat's singleness of purpose. More

than once he was heard to say that he was grieved to cause her sorrow for she was a saint. "She is a true religious of the meek and humble Heart of Jesus," was his verdict upon her when the time of trial had passed away. "She did not open her mouth to defend or excuse herself."

Immediately on her return to Paris, he called upon her to obtain her signature to two documents. The first, founded upon a false reading of the Constitutions, she absolutely refused to sign, but as to the second—a promise to restore the Society to the footing on which it stood in 1827—she asked for a delay in order that she might consult her Assistants General. But she had to fight the battle alone. Mothers Galitzin and de Limminghe looked upon her position in Paris as one almost of captivity, and fearing lest under pressure she would compromise the freedom of the Society, not only did not come to her, but drew up and signed a written protest against any measures that might, as they imagined, be wrung from her. Mother de Charbonnel also kept away from Paris. But this fear only showed that the strength of Mother Barat's character was not fathomed, even by those who should have known her best. Mgr Mathieu judged her differently, and wrote to Cardinal Lambruschini: "Mother Barat has had a great deal to withstand and struggle against since she came to Paris. She has borne herself throughout with a firmness, spirit of faith, and submission to the Holy See which place her very high in my esteem." After entering into particulars, he concludes by imploring that if mistakes have been made, the blame may be imputed to him, not to Mother Barat.

There was an opinion which, though utterly groundless, was widely accepted at that time, that Mother Barat was growing old, and that increasing years were bringing with them a failure of power. The inference from this was that the affairs of the Society would stand a better chance in other hands. "The good head, the real head of the Society is Mother de Gramont," was a remark not infrequently heard. Mother Barat's humility often suggested to her that her resignation would bring peace, and she would willingly have been thrown overboard to save the ship.

Prayer was her one resource, and she spent so much time in the little vestibule spoken of before, that Mgr Mathieu, fearing she would wear herself out, wrote to dissuade her from excessive prolongation of these hours. "Bind yourself to your Cross only by the chains of love," he wrote, "and let this holy Cross itself be your prayer. There is deep truth in this thought, and much strength and comfort." Her letters at this trying time are full of calm and charity. In November, she wrote: "I must say that when Mgr Affre asked for my signature, he in no sense coerced me. He urged me to sign, and laid before me in strong terms the danger to which I exposed the Society by rejecting the means he proposed to me for saving it, but his last word always was, 'You are free to accept or refuse, to save or to ruin your Society!' I repeat, I am where I was, and His Grace insists no further."

Mother Galitzin had an iron will, and autocratic by nature and education, she was altogether without that insight into character necessary for ruling others. But if her will was iron, her heart had the purity and strength of gold, and it was the very assurance of the purity of her intentions, that seemed to stand in the way of her understanding the true state of the case. Father Barrelle's retreat had aroused all the generosity of her ardent soul, and under the influence of the intense desire to sacrifice every thing to save the Society, she had offered herself as a victim to suffer and die for this end. Before leaving Lyons, she wrote out with a resolute hand her act of oblation, and it was ratified by Mother Barat, to whom she showed it. We cannot doubt that God accepted the offering, for the new year soon to open was the last she was to spend on earth. Her mind was possessed with the idea that to act as she was acting was a necessity, and she saw no further. It was a delusion, but she could not see that it was so, and could not look upon her action as blameworthy. Mother Barat wrote to her on December 6th, setting before her a calm account of the whole situation. Her letter ended thus:

It is for the Society to judge us. I have no fear in giving it an account of my conduct. If it agrees with you, I shall easily be

consoled, because in that case I shall have lost its confidence, and shall the more quickly and with greater ease obtain what I so ardently desire—to be nothing. If, on the contrary, the Society survives this crisis, I shall still be glad to have suffered and to have been humbled. Moreover, the end of it all for me cannot be far off ; one cannot bear so much grief without being worn away by it. I recommend myself to your prayers.

A few days later she wrote again :

Our Lord allows these troubles to purify us, and to enable me to expiate the faults of my too long government ; for to-day, the feast of St. Thomas, I have been Superior for forty years. I was just twenty-three then. How many crosses have come since ! Could I have expected those which surround my old age ? and from whom ! But I repeat, it is a mercy ; and so you must believe that my feelings for you are unchanged. Some day, no doubt, we shall know why God allowed so extraordinary a state of things, and one that might so easily have been avoided, if we had understood one another.

On Christmas Day, she wrote to Mother de Rozeville : "People can be really ungrateful only to God. If others owe us nothing, as is true, we should be wrong to accuse them of ingratitude. Besides, have we never been ungrateful to our Lord ?" Such words as these show the thoughts of her own heart. To Mother Eugénie de Gramont she wrote : "No, my dear good Mother, I am not unjust towards you. One day perhaps you will know all I have suffered. This word has escaped me unawares, and it will be the only one. I do not like to complain. I prefer to pray and keep silence." To another —one of those most dear to her—she said : "Your words would have pained me, if I did not sometimes separate what your pen writes from what your heart feels." Whatever happened there was to be no recrimination. She wrote to Mother d'Avenas : "You must not say, so and so has done this. It is our unfaithfulness as a body that has brought these evils upon us. How can we repair them now ? God alone knows. We must pray." "When the night is darkest, dawn is nearest," and Mother Barat's prayers were beginning to take effect. Early in December, Mgr Affre addressed a memorial to the Holy See, in which he besought the Pope to prevent the ruin

of a Society so useful to the Church in France, by re-enforcing in their original form the Statutes approved by Leo XII. There was no disguising the fact that the Society was in extreme peril. The nuncio was aware of all that was going on, and with the clear-sightedness of a practised diplomatist he gauged men and things very truly. He saw that any false step might make the danger irremediable, and when consulting with Mother Barat as to the course to pursue, he urged the necessity of some one well acquainted with the situation being sent to Rome to explain the true state of the case.

Mgr Mathieu seemed the right person, to all parties concerned, and he undertook the mission at Mother Barat's request. Before starting, he made himself acquainted with the opinion of those amongst the French Bishops who had convents of the Sacred Heart in their dioceses; all joined in a petition to the Holy Father to ward off the danger. Mgr Mathieu arrived in Rome on January 18th, 1843, and when he said Mass that same morning at the Gesù, upon the altar that covers the body of St. Ignatius, he besought the saint to obtain the frustration of his plans and of his mission, if his acts were not for the greater glory of God. His reception by Cardinals Lambruschini and Pedicini was all that could be desired, and he was soon received with great kindness by Gregory XVI., who read in his presence a letter addressed to him by Mother Barat. A Commission of Cardinals was appointed to examine the Decrees, and they listened with equal favour to his explanations. In the abstract, they all were in favour of the new Decrees, and of the residence of the Superior General in Rome, but was it the moment to carry through these measures to the injury of the Society they wished to benefit?

Mother Barat was at Conflans when a letter from Rome, dated March 9th, brought her the final solution of the difficulty. The reply of the Cardinals to the question whether the new Decrees of the General Congregation of the Religious of the Sacred Heart should be approved was in the negative, and they declared that the Society was to be henceforth governed in accordance with the Rules confirmed by Leo XII. This

was the opinion of all the Cardinals on the Commission, including Cardinal Pedicini. The Pope had sanctioned this reply by his approbation. Mgr Mathieu, in his letter, drew attention to the fact that the Commission had sat on the First Friday of the month, and he attributed to the Sacred Heart the happy result. In another of his letters, the Archbishop of Besançon laid down rules for Mother Barat's guidance in the work of restoring peace. "You will gain nothing," he said, "by command, but all will come right by kindness, compliance, and forbearance. So, if there must be excess, let it be in leaning towards our Lord's way of acting. He always meets us more than half-way in spite of our faults. As to the government of your Society, the more gentleness and kindness you show to every one the more it is incumbent upon you to be firm and really *Superior* in all the force of the term."

A circular letter which Mother Barat issued on April 6th, fully carried out this idea. She had previously announced that the Decrees of 1839 were abolished, but she wrote now entering into further details as to the transactions of the past three years. In the course of the letter this passage occurred: "Soon we shall be thanking our Lord for the trials we have passed through; we shall recognize that the Cross is always the Tree of Life, and that all good things come to us with it." In this hope, she exhorted all the members of the Society to forget past differences of opinion, to see the word of God in the decision of the Vicar of Christ.

Her hope was not vain. When the Cardinal Protector came to the Trinità to inform the Superior, Mother de Coriolis, of the measures taken to restore peace to the Society: "There is no doubt," she answered, "they will bring peace. Those whose wishes are thwarted by this decision are all good religious. Obedience to the Holy See will be their first law." This proved to be the case, and no dissentient voice was raised: all submitted. The news of the decision was brought to Mother de Limminghe by Mgr Mathieu, who added that if either of the Assistants General wished to resign their charge, Mother Barat was empowered to accept the resignation. In her first surprise at

these words, Mother de Limminghe looked on them as a way of asking her to offer hers, and without consulting, without even pausing to reflect, she wrote to Mother Barat a letter of which she repented all the rest of her life. In a very few words she thanked the Superior General and the Society for the confidence that had been shown her, and begged that she might be allowed to resign a charge the duties of which she felt she could no longer fulfil. To judge rightly of such an act done at such a moment we have but to read Mother Barat's admirable answer.

Paris, March 22nd, 1843.

I was about to close my letter, dear Mother, when yours of the 11th was handed to me. I read it with sorrow, as you will well believe, and although now more than ever I have learnt to rely on God alone, still I was astonished at your mode of acting; not exactly at your resignation, for I know your repugnance to charges, and I imagine that you sought to profit by a specious pretext for throwing off the weightiest of those you bear. But, dear Mother, before sending me your resignation, and especially before informing the other Assistants of what you had done, was not some consideration due on your part towards a Mother who had been so intimate with you, and rather a friend than a Superior?

I think you should not have begun by being in such a hurry, and acting on impulse; your heart usually so full of kindness ought to have prompted you to give me warning, and explain your reasons. Then, if I had approved of them it would have been time enough to tender your resignation, and inform others of it.

I leave these questions to your reflection, and allow me, dear Mother, to have a little time to think it all over before I see things as you do, and accept your resignation, for I am not in such a hurry to lose you as you were to take yourself off. In the meantime we will both pray that our Lord may enlighten us; then I shall endeavour to act I hope according to His spirit and His will.

But although Mother de Limminghe withdrew her resignation, unable to resist the force of an expostulation so kind and so just, the publicity she had given to it made it in fact irrevocable, and her withdrawal came too late. Before it arrived another Assistant General had been appointed to take her place. This was Mother Henriette Coppens, who wrote

to her: "You have let fall your cross, dear Mother, and I have picked it up." Mother de Limminghe's letter to Mother Barat on learning this nomination was as follows:

July 26th, 1843.

I cannot let this post go without telling you how deeply touched I am by what you are so kind as to say about my resignation. I thank our Lord for the choice He has inspired you to make of my successor. Mother Henriette will, I am convinced, fill with great advantage to you, and to the Society a charge in which for a long time, dearest Mother, I have been no longer of any use to you.

It was no doubt to your delicate, charitable, and motherly indulgence that I owe what you said to me in the letter that led me to revoke my resignation, when I saw that it seemed to cause sorrow to you, as well as to the Mothers Assistant General. Our Lord allowed that this step of mine should have been known too late; and this will, I have no doubt, be beneficial to the Society, according to my ardent desire. But what I wish above every thing else, dearest Mother, is that you may be comforted and happy.

In extreme old age Mother de Limminghe still regretted the hasty step she had taken. "God allowed me to make this mistake," she once said, when over eighty years of age, "to punish me, and to teach me detachment. Imperfect as I am, there was something too much of nature in my affection for our Mother General. God punished me just where I had erred, and I thank Him for it." She was maintained in all her other offices and was, until they were parted by death, Mother Barat's friend, confidant, and dearly beloved daughter.

Mother Galitzin was tempted to imitate the example of Mother de Limminghe, but she proceeded less hurriedly. At first, she begged Mother Barat to maintain her only in her charge of Provincial of the American houses, and mindful of the offer she made to be a victim for the Society, she implored to be allowed to return to America to set the convents on the footing they had been before her last visit, that is, to undo all the work she had done in establishing the Decrees of 1839.

Mother Barat granted her request as to allowing her return to America, but maintained her in her charge of Assistant

General. After a satisfactory reply, Mother Barat wrote to her again on April 1st.

I have just received your letter of the 29th, and it was balm to my poor wounded heart; of course this is more than ever the moment for me to have the help of your detachment and zeal. It is thus we shall save the Society. . . . I am growing old, and though, for many months past I have been working like a galley slave, I feel that I shall drop suddenly. But before that happens, I want to put our beloved chariot back again on its four wheels, and if you take away two of them how can it get on? Of course I can find others to replace them, but changes just now would be more than inopportune, as you will see if you think over it all.

"Thanks be to God," Mother Barat wrote at this time to Mother du Rousier, "the spirit of the Society is good. Our Lord allows that the minds of all should not see things in the same way, but His Heart will lead them all back to think alike." If this forecast proved true, as it happily did, and if the Society underwent so severe a trial, for four years, without the loss of a single house or a single religious, it was owing, under God, to Mother Barat's gentle and wise prudence. A letter written at the end of 1842, by Mother de Rozeville, gives a glimpse of Mother Barat during this time of trial.

I have seen our Mother General [she says], she works, prays, is calm and full of courage, but there is no doubt of her sufferings; she will never seek the remedy to the present crisis at the expense of conscience. This is an *article of faith* to me; therefore she is, and always ought to be, the compass by which we steer our course; for she alone has the mission to guide us, and our Lord will make this manifest. I should only mistrust any one else. . . . If this is a trial to which God is subjecting us, we must humbly bow our heads. He may, when He wills, change the trial to a victory. If, *in spite of every thing*, we do not remain in union, peace, and charity, *all is lost*. The breath of God will disperse us like dust, and we shall be annihilated. Father Varin says our Mother errs by excess of humility and charity; he would be very far from saying, as others do, that she errs from weakness or from affection for any creature. She has such breadth of mind, such greatness of soul, that no narrow views could hamper her judgment. There is nothing petty about her motives of action.

She refers every thing to God, and not to secondary ends. From 1839, no one should have acted without her authority. We must believe it was all done with a good intention, but that is not enough to make the acts good. We are lost if we do not maintain prayer, peace, charity and union, union amongst ourselves, and union of the whole body with the *head*, where resides the mission, the spirit of God and experience. It was not yesterday our Mother took the helm, and she has done nothing to lessen our confidence and veneration.

Mother Barat herself referred all the happy turn of events to the Holy Father. "He has saved the Society," she continually repeated; and in 1843, she wrote; "We must become his consolation by living, as true religious, a life full of love for our Lord; we owe him this, do we not?"

In July and August, Mother Barat visited the houses of Nantes, Tours, Autun, Besançon and Montet, and in October she went to Beauvais and to Amiens. Her object in these visits was chiefly to maintain union. "I think," she wrote, "that they were of some advantage to the Society." "How near destruction the Society has been!" she wrote to Mother du Rousier in March, 1843, "and solely because, in spite of the best intentions, we were not of one mind. But, believe me, it is always safest to uphold authority; if the motives against doing so were ever so strong, God does not bless them. He has allowed these things to give experience to the Society."

These words show the fruit that the Society had reaped from the trials that had come and gone. Mother Barat also gained, for her sufferings—so great that one who witnessed them thought that God had increased for her the measure of anguish the human heart can contain—had raised her to a far higher holiness even than she had previously attained, thus proving once more the truth of her own words: "The Cross is the lever by which we are raised nearer to God."

CHAPTER XXXV

JOYS AND SORROWS IN AMERICA. 1843–1844.

Praise be Thine.
I see the whole design.
I, who saw Power, see now Love perfect too.
BROWNING.

TWO things were especially remarked during the years of sorrow and trial that Mother Barat passed through at this time of her life. There had never been so many new foundations, nor had she ever required her daughters, especially those still in their novicesship, with a love of God that was more tender and intense. Thus, when the trial was over, the field of labour was wider and more fruitful, and the labourers were ready to work in it with redoubled ardour and self-sacrifice.

One of Mother Barat's first companions, now growing very old, was granted, about this time, two favours for which she had always longed. When Mother Galitzin went first to America, she yielded to Mother Duchesne's entreaties to be relieved from the burden of government, and shortly afterwards was allowed by Mother Barat to grant her also a second request, — that of going, as she hoped, to end her days among the Indians. Mgr Rosati, Bishop of the diocese, asked that a colony of nuns of the Sacred Heart might be sent to the Christian tribe of the Potowatomies, who lived on the borders of Missouri. The great missionary, Father de Smet, re-awakened all Mother Duchesne's youthful enthusiasm by his words, and the hope of joining the colony seemed to give her new life. "The mission of Louisiana was not our first object," wrote

Mother Barat to Mother Galitzin, when sending leave for the foundation. "Mother Duchesne's inspiration for the missions was in the hope of converting the Indians."

"With what joy and consolation, dear Mother and old child," she wrote to Mother Duchesne, "did I receive your letter with the stamp of the Potowatomies' village! At last you have attained to an Indian settlement, so long the object of your desires! May our Lord keep you, and enable you to do good there. . . . Pray for your Mother, who would dearly love to join you in your labours. She is unworthy of it. At least, I console myself by thinking that you replace me in ministering to these dear Indians." And she wrote to Mother de Rozeville, who shared her wish: "We should be too happy to end our days far from the busy world, in a distant corner of the globe, and there grow holy by teaching simple souls, but this mission is not for us. We have to expiate our faults, our weaknesses, our shortcomings in God's service. Let us suffer then, let us bear our cross; it ought to be our life, and let us leave the Indians to Mother Duchesne, who is of the good old times."

But Mother Duchesne was not to die amongst the Indians, and, as her enfeebled powers were daily diminishing under the hardships of life at Sugar Creek, she returned, under obedience, to St. Charles, where her remaining years were spent in poverty, humiliation, and suffering. "You would cry, if you saw her poor room," wrote Mother Lucile Mathevon. "Her bed, if bed it can be called, is under a staircase; she says she is quieter there than elsewhere." The whole furniture of her cell was a folding bed, a chair, a worm-eaten box, containing some writings, letters, and souvenirs of Mother Barat, a few old prayer-books, some copies of the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, some clothes, and instruments of penance. Here, in prayer and mortification and silence, the last years of Mother Duchesne's life were spent.

On Mother Galitzin's first visit to America, in June, 1840, she established a community at New York, and transferred the noviceship at Fleurissant to MacSherry's town in Pennsylvania.

From there she went to Canada, and founded a house at St. Jacques de l'Achigan. On her return, in 1843, she visited these three convents, and then turned her steps southwards. In November, she was at St. Michel, in Louisiana, where yellow fever was raging, but far from being deterred by the danger, she seemed to court it. She nursed the sick assiduously, and did not leave them until their last breath was drawn.

A fortnight after her arrival, she was attacked by the malady, and felt that the time was come to complete the sacrifice of her life, which she had offered to God at La Ferrandière, the previous year. "I do not fear death," she said to the doctor, who hesitated to reply to her question whether she was to die. "I rather wish for it, if it is God's will, for that is all I care about." The end came on the eve of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, after extreme suffering.

Mother Galitzin had, if we may be allowed to say so, worked for the Society "not wisely but too well." Her gifts, and above all her energy, gave great force to her impetuous acts, but she obtained obedience rather than influence, and inspired admiration rather than confidence, because she was wanting both in the moderation of mind necessary for weighing men and things in a true balance, and in the moderation of character necessary for dispassionate action. No one would deny that she was highly gifted, and that with the whole bent of her will she desired to be a good religious. She erred grievously, but the heroism of her death stands as a screen between us and her mistakes, for she gave her life for the Society, and "greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." No one loved her as Mother Barat did, and no one knew so well what her faults were. To develop the riches of her nature, Mother Barat lavished love and confidence upon her, trusting that the return would be commensurate with the outlay, trusting also that the wealth of treasures stored within her heart would, if duly cultivated, obliterate by degrees the tendencies which were opposed to her future usefulness. She founded great hopes upon her, and the suffering she endured at

her hands was equally great. But she did not, she could not, being what she was, love her less for this.

"What a void her death leaves," she wrote, "especially to me, for she was my right hand! How devoted she was, for it was zeal alone that urged her to return to America, in spite of the fever that for many years seldom left her. She went to find, all too soon, a death that was really the object of her wishes."

The work that Mother Galitzin left unfinished in America devolved in part on Mother Aloysia Hardey, who won the confidence of all, and by developing the Society, whilst keeping up the closest bonds of union with the centre, did an immense work for education and religion in the United States. Her companion in these labours was for some years Mother Cutts, who belonged to an English Leicestershire family. Like Sister Elizabeth, she, although a lady by birth and education, had entered as a lay-sister, but when her Superiors found how useful to souls would be the special qualities with which she was endowed, they required the sacrifice of her longing for a life of hidden and obscure toil. Mother Galitzin had named her Superior of Grand Coteau, and intended to request that Mother Cutts might succeed her, when she herself was recalled to France. On Mother Galitzin's death, Mother Cutts was placed over the houses in Louisiana and Missouri, whilst Mother Hardey had charge of those in the Eastern States.

During the years from 1840 to 1844, thirteen foundations were made in various parts of the world. In 1842, Mother Barat removed the noviceship from the Rue Monsieur to Conflans, where it occupied the building that had been the diocesan seminary. The situation made it eminently fitted for the purpose, and it has been ever since the central noviceship of the Society.

Mother Barat wrote from Rome, in 1842, to Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud:

I address this letter to Conflans, as you will be established there when it arrives. I am longing for news of your installation. You will have less room than you had in Paris, but it is much more healthy,

and above all more religious. Then the solitude! It does one good to see only our Lord, His likeness, and His works in the beauties of nature. How I should like to be there! But *I know not what I ask;* there as everywhere else I should be pursued by anxieties and by visitors. Let us then wish for nothing but our Master's good pleasure. This is the only way to attain peace.

It was Mother Barat's great desire that every thing at Conflans should bear the mark of simplicity and poverty. "Send back the mahogany furniture to the school," she wrote to Mother Eulalie. "Our old things will do for us; I will not have these luxuries in the noviceship. I wish this noviceship to be the model of all the others on the head of poverty, and I own it is to bring this about, that I wish you to be there. Our Lord will only bless us when we have both *affective* and *effective* love for poverty." She made similar recommendations with regard to the new buildings undertaken to fit the seminary, which was old and out of repair, for the purpose to which it was now applied. She called it "Bethany," to remind all who lived in it to make it an abode where our Lord would like to dwell, because every thing displeasing to Him would be banished from it. On her return to Paris in December, 1842, she paid her first visit to the noviceship at Conflans, and on this occasion, the foundation-stone was laid of the beautiful Gothic chapel.

An important foundation was made at Algiers in 1842, and one in the following year at Lemberg, in Polish Gallicia. Mother Barat wrote from Rome in June, 1842, to Mother Eugénie de Gramont:

The foundation at Lemberg goes on its course; several postulants are waiting for our arrival, and the house is being prepared. The last letter I received from the country contains an offer to send the money for the journeys. What I am in want of is a Superior; if I had one, the colony would have started by this time. I am waiting till our Lord sends me one, and confess I am praying hard to get her. Our friends are so urgent that we cannot refuse; in fact I dare not. They want an English person, an Italian, and a German; we have these; but they wish that the Superior should be French. . . . It is the same everywhere, and yet we are only moderately liked. We must

put up with injustice for love of our Lord. What matter that people should not be fond of us, provided they love Him! Is not this what we want? What are our works, and what are we ourselves? Nothing. Did not St. Paul call himself the "refuse of the world, the offscouring." We should be happy to be so also.

The foundation was made in May, 1843. The Governor of Gallicia, Archduke Ferdinand d'Este, gave the house, and defrayed all expenses. The building offered at first was in the Jews' quarter of the town, an unfavourable situation. Mother Barat wrote as follows, on June 30th, 1843, to Mother Marie de la Croix, the Superior:

Before you make any change, take advice, do nothing to displease either the worthy Primate, who is your protector and father, or the Governor, who is your benefactor. Great prudence and slowness of action are necessary at the outset; this last quality will be very difficult for you, who (be it said by-the-by), are French in the whole meaning of the word. Now for my ideas, which are indications, not orders, as at such a distance and in ignorance of the circumstances, it would be imprudent of me to lay you under obedience. Of course, in our part of the world it would never do to have a school in the Jews' quarter, and I dislike the idea extremely. If, after having taken advice, you are sure the situation is unsuitable, would you not do well to see how the land lies, and whether it would not be possible for another house to be chosen for us? If it is impossible, and if in that country the neighbourhood of the Jews would not be a hindrance to our works, take time to examine what repairs are absolutely necessary, and especially in this matter, as well as in furnishing the house, let there be no excess, no luxury, let all be as simple as possible; once more beware of debts. If the repairs are likely to take some months and meantime the house is uninhabitable, ask the Archbishop and your other friends to allow you to rent a small house for six months, where you can live in community; you are too numerous now to stay in a private house, besides that is not the place for us. Remember St. Teresa and her foundations, how she tried to hide herself; and yet she was certainly worth seeing. Who could say as much of us? From every point of view we shall gain by being alone, and near our Lord.

When you have most carefully set your temporal affairs in order, my child, do the same for your little community, until you have pupils. Plan out the day so that each one can study, or work for the house or

sacristy; there is always enough to be done; but, dear child, order above every thing: it is the pith and marrow of a foundation. What helps very much to establish it, is the peace of the soul, the calm of mortified passions, and above all union with our Lord. I foresee that patience will be very necessary for you. Our Lord will grant it to you, if you ask Him for it, and if, maintaining your soul in peace, you see every thing in God and for God, act with a view to please Him alone, and keep for your own share only sacrifice.

In 1843, Mother Barat established Mother Desmarquest as Superior at Conflans, and taking with her Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud went to Le Mans, Nantes, and Tours and thence to Autun, Besançon, and Montet. Whilst there she named Mother Henriette Coppens Assistant General. "I should have wished," she said, "to leave things as they were until the General Congregation in 1845, to avoid commotion. Without refusing the resignation tendered to me I sought to gain time, but as the request was repeated, I proposed Mother Henriette Coppens in Rome, and she was accepted until the Congregation meets. I was bound to take some one neutral, and some one who had kept aloof as she has done. When asked as to her opinions, her invariable answer has been that after the Holy Father, her Superior General was every thing to her, and her conduct proves the sincerity of her expressions."

Mother Barat placed Mother Thérèse Maillucheau as Superior at Montet, and went on to La Ferrandière, where she invited several Superiors to meet her, hoping to strengthen thus the bonds of charity. She had done the same thing at Montet. On September 8th, 1843, she wrote: "In my journey I have met with consolation everywhere, on the subject of our late difficulties. Some traces still have to be obliterated, but the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which have already done so much for us, will continue to help us to the end. We must go on praying."

In December, 1843, Cardinal Pedicini died, and Mother Barat wrote to the Holy Father, asking him to name Cardinal Lambruschini to succeed him as Protector of the Society. Pressure of business had obliged the Cardinal to refuse

countless requests of the same kind, but this time the Pope gave him Mother Barat's letter saying: "Here is a petition you cannot put aside." He read the letter and admitted that he could not refuse.

"I should not allow you to accept for any other Congregation," said Gregory XVI., "but it is my wish that you do so for this." "You would have done better to have asked for some one else," Cardinal Lambruschini said pleasantly, when announcing his acceptance in one of the Roman convents of the Sacred Heart, "for then instead of one Protector you would have had two."

In January, 1844, Mother Barat received from the Holy Father a Brief in which he said: "We have received with the singular benevolence which we bear to the religious Society *so wisely governed* by you, our well-beloved daughter, your letter of December 10th last;" and he goes on to declare that the eminent virtues of Cardinal Lambruschini, and his special affection for the Society of the Sacred Heart were a guarantee of his zeal for procuring the good of the Institute.

In October, 1843, Mother Barat was recalled to Paris by business connected with a foundation in England.

CHAPTER XXXVI

"OUR LADY'S DOWRY." 1842–1844.

Virgin-glory, deign
Into thy hand to take again
This island's sceptre, thine before,
In the Christ-loving days of yore.
Take it, and by its gentle sway
To better times ordain the way.

E. CASWALL.

WE are so accustomed, superficially, to look on devotion to the Sacred Heart as a new devotion, that it is a surprise to find how deeply rooted it was in the life and piety of our ancestors, how many traces of it are met with in our mediæval writers, and found carved in stone in the desecrated churches of England, up and down the country. As a writer in the *Dublin Review*, for April, 1897, has pointed out, so familiar was it to Englishmen in the fifteenth century, that Sir Thomas Gascoign made an entry in his commonplace book to the effect that "By Christ's dear Heart," *Per Cor Christi preciosum*, was an oath frequently heard on their lips, in his time.

"That the faithful in England during the Middle Ages were almost as familiar with the idea and its representation in Christian art as we are," the same writer continues, "there can be little doubt. It was preached about in the chapter-houses of monks; it found its place in the poetry of the people, in their common speech, in the very names of their dwellings. But it was pre-eminently in their churches that they loved to see this symbol of Divine charity and compassion; so they carved it cunningly on the outer walls of the houses of God,

placed it above their heads in sculptured porch or lordly minster, emblazoned it on fairest glass, that their eyes might gaze upon it, as they knelt in prayer. And as the living were familiar with it in church and home, in speech and prayer, so in death they would rest beneath the same beloved Heart. In peace and in conflict, in glorious abbey churches, and in the martyrs' dungeons, under the piety of the Fifth and the tyranny of the Eighth Henry and his daughter Elisabeth, was the Sacred Heart known and loved by our fathers in the faith. In their last brave struggle for religious liberty, they bore it on their banners, they carried their love for it with them into the land of exile, to be cheered there by the fuller revelation of a devotion dear to them through many centuries, and to draw anew therefrom all manner of graces for themselves and their country which of old had loved it so well."

When Father de la Colombière was appointed chaplain to Queen Mary of Modena, he spent two years in London, and the zealous apostle of the devotion to the Sacred Heart did his utmost to enkindle the sacred fire in the few souls to whom his words had access. He succeeded, however, and when, at the time of the Titus Oates' plot, he was first imprisoned, and then banished, the devotion, Father Dalgairns tells us, "probably still lay hid in England, and did secret work in quiet places and in humble souls." It reappeared, at any rate, just at the time when the struggle for Catholic Emancipation was in progress, and its promoter was the man to whom the Church in England owes it that the change from oppression to liberty was effected without serious compromise of principle. The first altar erected in England in honour of the Sacred Heart was that of a private chapel, where Dr Milner used to say Mass. He, in fact, introduced the devotion amongst his clergy, and put up a stained glass window of our Lord disclosing His Sacred Heart, in the little chapel of his seminary at Old Oscott.

When we consider that the number of priests who sought refuge in England at the time of the French Revolution, and received such generous hospitality from a Protestant

Government, was little short of 10,000, it is no wonder that Mother Barat's interest was early enlisted in favour of the country. "England is made for great things," she said in 1802, and the desire to plant a colony there was never lost sight of, though she had long to wait before it was accomplished. English children were sometimes sent to one of her schools in France, and if they became Catholics while there, her joy was very great. Of some such she wrote in 1839, to Mother d'Avenas: "They will be our forerunners in England, for with the help of the Sacred Heart I hope we shall go there to sow the grain of mustard-seed in a year and a half, or two years' time. We have some English novices, and I think the time is coming."

From 1829, when Catholics were freed from the oppressive legislation that had for so long kept them in a state of social inferiority, and had banished them from an active part in the life of the country, the old religion was slowly but surely making way in England, and as it did so, the need for wider opportunities for education became every year more felt. Many of the old contemplative Orders that at the time of the French Revolution sought and found refuge in England, undertook the education of girls, but the work was uncongenial to their spirit, and was performed only as a condition of existence. Moreover, the convents were very few and far between. In 1840, there were but two in the whole of the South of England, and no notable increase in their number began till ten years later.

Not many English novices had entered the Society of the Sacred Heart, for it was little known in England, and to join it, involved the sacrifice of country as well as of home, but by degrees a few gathered round Mother Barat, until at last she found her English enterprise was feasible. Mother de Gramont's assistant at the Rue de Varenne was Mother Croft, who, Irish by birth, had entered the noviceship in Paris. She was placed, after leaving it, under the care of Mother de Gramont, who soon discerned her unusual gifts, and took special pains to fit her for the active works of the Society.

Her extreme timidity and diffidence were always a source of trial, and gave her continual opportunities of self-conquest; but her virtue and moral courage enabled her to obtain a complete victory over herself, and her government as Assistant was as firm as it was gentle. When, in 1841, a community of Bridgettine nuns at Roscrea, in County Tipperary, made known their wish to be united to the Society of the Sacred Heart, Mother de Gramont proposed that Mother Croft should be entrusted with the work, which was one whose success Mother Barat had much at heart. The suggestion was approved, and the companion chosen for her was Mother Charlotte Goold, a connexion of Lord Clifford. He had made Mother Barat's acquaintance in Rome, and his daughter Eleanor entered the noviceship in 1838.

Charlotte Goold was born in 1804. She had been sent to school at the Oratoire at Amiens, and, on leaving, made no secret of her wish to join the Society. But she had to wait till she was nearly thirty before the consent of her family could be obtained, and in the meantime she was obliged to mix much in society in London, Paris, and Brussels. She entered the noviceship in 1833, and Mother Barat judged at once that hers was a soul apt for work and suffering. When Mother Galitzin went to America, Mother Charlotte Goold was chosen to succeed her as Secretary General, and later on, when she was preparing for her Profession, Mother Barat wrote to her: "I have a deep and constant conviction that our Lord wants us in Great Britain; redouble your prayers, and on the day of your Profession may you obtain from Him the grace to sacrifice yourself, by working in the Society and under obedience for the salvation of your country."

In 1842, the foundation at Roscrea was decided upon, and Mothers Croft and Goold left France for Ireland. But on the way they went to England to see a house at Cannington, in Somersetshire, offered to the Society by Lord Clifford, who was most anxious that Mother Barat should establish a convent there.

It was an old Benedictine Priory called Court House, founded in the reign of Stephen by a Norman knight, Robert

de Cossy, who, according to an ancient record, "richly endowed it for the maintenance of twelve religious women, with the sum of £25 a year." In the reign of Henry VIII., on the dissolution of the monasteries, the revenues were bestowed by the King on one of his favourites, who pulled down the old house and built the present one on its ruins. It is a square block with heavily mullioned windows, and adjoining it is a fine old Gothic church, unhappily in Protestant hands. In the reign of Charles II., Court House and the manor of Cannington reverted to the Crown and were bestowed by the King upon his Treasurer and favourite, Lord Clifford, on condition that house and lands should be inalienable and only let during the life-time of the proprietor. It was therefore the use of the house for a limited and uncertain length of time which Lord Clifford offered Mother Barat in 1838, when a Revolution again seemed imminent in France. Two years previously it had been left vacant by the removal of a Benedictine community that had occupied it for many years. It was altogether unsuitable both by its position and by its tenure for a foundation, but Lord Clifford's wish prevailed, and even after the fear of needing it as a refuge had passed away, negotiations were maintained which led to the visit from Mothers Croft and Goold. The religious were received very warmly; three lay-sister postulants were presented to them from Lord Clifford's household, and it was arranged that a community should take possession in the course of the following year.

From Cannington the foundresses went on to Ireland.

I like the idea of the foundation in Ireland [Mother Barat wrote from Rome to Mother d'Avenas, in January, 1842]. The house is already established, and, as you say, it will be our way into England.... Since I began this letter I was called away to see a Bishop from New South Wales, who implored me to send out a community to Sydney. I had my usual answer to give, a refusal or indefinite postponement; thus it is a continual conflict between zeal and prudence. But Australia is an English colony; foundations in Ireland and England will enable us to go there in time, as they will supply us with

those who speak the language, and in view of this two-fold advantage, we ought to make every sacrifice to carry this foundation through.

The devil is doing all he can against us over there [she wrote a few days later]. Does not this show that he is afraid of our coming into the country? We must pray to St. Michael to help and protect us, for we shall meet with great obstacles. Many people are ill-disposed towards us. What does it matter if our Lord calls us? He will be stronger than they. We must not let slip the opportunities He may put in our way.

The foundation at Roscrea was accepted; Mother Croft went to Ireland in June to take up her abode there. The excellent dispositions of the Bridgettine nuns, and the example of their holy Superior, Mother Mac Mahon, lightened the labours of the foundation, which was nevertheless an arduous and difficult task, and tested Mother Croft's patience and calm, though it never found her wanting in abnegation or self-control. The boarding school rapidly increased, so that fresh buildings were added within a few months of her arrival. Two hundred children attended the poor school, and the accounts of their utter destitution touched Mother Barat's heart so much, that we find her writing to Mother Croft many directions as to what she was to provide to alleviate the distress. It was a very fruitful seed that Mother Croft planted at Roscrea, and it has borne fruit a hundred-fold.

Whilst Mothers Croft and Goold were in Ireland, Mother d'Avenas had come to London to see a house at Acton, in Middlesex, which had been recommended to Mother Barat as suitable for a school. Mother Goold joined her, and both received the kindest hospitality from the nuns of the Benedictine Convent at Hammersmith. This convent had been founded by Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II., and, strangely enough, on its site is now a Convent of the Sacred Heart. The Benedictine nuns removed to Teignmouth, and a diocesan seminary was built where the convent had stood. This building was bought in 1892, by the Society, and the wish that its founder, Cardinal Manning, expressed, when he prayed that all who go forth from its threshold may be

apostles and evangelists of the Sacred Heart,* is echoed by those who now live and work within its walls, and who strive to give his prayer a literal fulfilment, though in a way he could not have foreseen when the wish was uttered.

The house Mother d'Avenas had come to see was Berrymead Priory, and stood, like Court House, upon the site and ruins of an ancient religious house, a Benedictine Priory destroyed in the reign of Henry VIII. The present house was built by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu early in the eighteenth century, and its associations are literary rather than religious. The ivy-covered Gothic porch is picturesque, but the house is small, and stands on low ground, so that the wall surrounding the garden shuts out all distant view. But it answered its purpose at the beginning.

Mother Barat wrote from Lyons in August, 1842, to Mother d'Avenas :

> England interests me deeply, and I have decided upon making all possible sacrifices for the foundation, but three houses at once seems to me a great deal. Roscrea and Cannington might have been managed, but where are we to find the funds and a Superior for the third ? I must not lose sight of Lemberg. There is Padua too, which I have been refusing for three or four years. I shall leave Genoa for the present, it must wait until it can be supplied from the noviceship of Turin. I assure you, dear Aimée, that it is only by dint of great effort that I can accept any foundations just now. Our most urgent present need is to knit our bonds more closely in our Lord, in order to save the Society in the crisis that threatens it even if it were to cost us life itself.

If, on the one hand, the difficulties in the way of the foundation were very great, on the other, the opportunity was a favourable one, and might not soon recur. The decision was therefore taken in favour of Berrymead, and Mother d'Avenas returned to London in September to conclude the purchase.

> Only one thing was wanting [she wrote]. I had no money, and yet it was clear I should have to pay at least a first instalment

* See the *Glories of the Sacred Heart.* Dedication.

of the price. Mother de Gramont only said: "You will see, you will find out. You must let me know all that goes on, but that put nothing in my purse, and certainly it was anxious work. Passing through Boulogne to the steamer, I saw Mr Adams, uncle of one of Ours, and said to him laughing that I was going to buy a house without a penny to pay for it. He proposed directly to lend me the money, to be repaid at our convenience. I thanked the providence of God and with a light heart arrived in London with my companion, an aspirant, Madame Tice. Even with the zealous and active help of Mr O'Kelly, it was not without difficulty that we succeeded in arranging every thing, and taking possession of Berrymead. When the time came for making the second payment, the banker from whom we expected to receive the money said he had no order to pay it to us. It was a difficult moment, but I had recourse to the Bishop, who most kindly offered to help me by a loan. However, I had no need to have recourse to this. The missing letter arrived, and the money was forthcoming.

The place of the foundation being thus prepared, Mother Barat set about choosing the colony to take possession of it. The person she had fixed on as Superior was Mother Lucie Merilhou, at that time Assistant to Mother de Rozeville at Amiens. On the 1st of October, 1842, she wrote to Mother de Rozeville:

I am obliged, my child and my dear Mother, to have recourse to you for some one for the English foundation, a foundation of such importance, and already too far advanced to be abandoned. We require some one who is mature, prudent, thoroughly religious, and calm. Nothing else will take in England, and she must be heart and soul devoted to the Society. I see no one I can make use of for this but Mother Merilhou. But I feel that I am depriving you of your support, hope, and consolation. Is it not too great a sacrifice? It will be the fruit and reward of your retreat. I should not have known how to ask it of you before; now that we have meditated on "God is all, and the creature nothing," now that we have devoted ourselves to suffering and humiliation, what harm can come of putting it all into practice? None—only what is good, safe, and perfect, our sanctification, a good preparation for death. At any cost, dear Mother, we must repair for the past, and how? By immolation of self; so I rely on your generosity.

Mother Merilhou was at this time still young. She had made her first vows in 1834, and had passed the time intervening between this and her Profession at Amiens, working with indefatigable devotedness in the school. In 1839, Mother de Rozeville was called to Rome; the Assistant was too infirm from age to replace her, and Mother Merilhou, though not yet professed, was put in charge of the house. At the end of the following year, she began her probation at the Mother House, and after her Profession, in May, 1841, she returned to Amiens as Assistant and mistress of class. The desire of Mother Barat to establish the Society in England was well known at Amiens; and many were the prayers offered that there might be no long delay in the revival of faith in that country. Mother Merilhou joined action to prayer, and worked hard at learning English, that if she were allowed to go to England she might be prepared. An English lady, Miss Tucker, came to Amiens at this time to examine her vocation, and whilst Mother Merilhou gave her lessons in French, she taught her mistress English. The pupil and the mistress were worthy of one another. Miss Tucker entered the noviceship, and the story of the long and fruitful labours of her after-life in America is well known.

When the moment came for making the foundation at Berrymead, Mother Barat consulted her councillors as to the choice of a Superior. Mother Desmarquest exclaimed: "Oh, Reverend Mother, you have a hidden treasure at Amiens, in Mother Merilhou. She is the person you want." On this, Mother Barat wrote the letter already quoted, and the departure of Mother Merilhou for England was decided upon.

The message which Reverend Mother Merilhou sent from her death-bed at Jette, in January, 1888, as a farewell to the novices there, sums up and gives the key to her life: "Tell the novices from me," she said, "that the essential and fundamental thing in the Society is obedience of the heart, an obedience that pre-supposes the spirit of faith and humility."

The members of the little colony, destined for England but

to be divided between Berrymead and Cannington, met in Paris, and Mother Barat gave them fresh courage and zeal by her parting recommendations. The foundresses of Berrymead set out early in December, 1842. The only difficulty we find any record of on their journey was at Dover. Mother Merilhou had been invited to take from the library at Amiens any duplicate books for the foundation. She chose the oldest copies, wishing to leave the best for Amiens, but the custom-house officials did not take the same view of the matter, and taxed her so heavily for the supposed valuable curiosities she was importing, that the demand upon her little stock of money was serious.

Accompanied by Mother d'Avenas, two children who were to form a beginning for the school, and a man-servant named Théophile, Mother Merilhou and four others arrived at Berrymead on the evening of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th, 1842. Their first thought was to choose a room for a chapel, and make it, by means of the presents they had brought with them, fit for this use.

Bishop Griffiths, who had been very cordial in his reception of Mothers d'Avenas and Goold at the time of their visit of the previous autumn, was absent in Rome at the time of the foundation, but his Vicar General called on the nuns two days after their arrival, and expressed great good-will and kindness towards them. On Christmas Day, Mass was said for the first time at Berrymead. Until then, the nuns had been obliged to go to hear Mass in the small underground chapel, at that time the only church of the Catholic inhabitants of Acton, and they were obliged to go in secular attire. Poverty of spiritual help was their portion at this time, and their share of material poverty was not wanting either. The house was almost bare of furniture, a few chairs, some iron bedsteads, and two or three old tables were all the luxuries of which it could boast.

It was a very laborious and uphill work upon which the foundresses had entered, and its difficulties were all foreseen by Mother Barat. "Your trials," she wrote to Mother Merilhou

in April, 1843, "are things you must leave our Blessed Lord to remedy when you have drawn profit from them for your own soul. The bee does not make honey only from sweet-juiced flowers. Some bitter must be mixed with it, and that is what makes it what it is. You must do likewise, and pass bitter and sweet, your sorrows and your joys, through the Heart of our Lord to make of them the honey of your perfection." A few months after the foundation, Bishop Griffiths came to Paris, and Mother Barat spoke to him of its prospects with all her own humility. "Education is far too much advanced in England, for there to be any need of us," she said. "I hope, however, we may be of some use, if it were only for the French girls who may be there." The Bishop took a different view, and expressed his opinion in the most encouraging terms. On his return to London, he visited Berrymead, said Mass there on the feast of the Sacred Heart, and again on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Mother Barat wrote to Mother Merilhou in May, 1843,

> You must wait till people know you, and you have won their confidence; you must make a study of the ways of the country, and adopt them as your own. So much for the exterior; but the most important and the surest way to succeed, is to work with zeal and perseverance to become fervent, holy religious of the Sacred Heart. Now is the time to draw down the blessing of God on this work, which is sure to meet with opposition, seen and unseen. But if our Lord is on your side, if you deserve His help by your love and fidelity, what can hurt you? It is essential therefore that none of you should frustrate His plans by want of generosity.

The chief event of 1843 for the little colony of Berrymead was the arrival amongst them of those destined for Cannington. From the time Mother Barat had accepted the offer of Court House, Lord Clifford had been busy preparing it for their reception, and amongst other things he had made a garden in the shape of a heart, and in the centre had planted a holly-bush, a curious presage of what was to come. We may remark that the heart placed as a decoration at the entrance to the house was designed by Dr Baines, Bishop of the district, and

formerly a strenuous opponent of the public worship of the Sacred Heart in England.

Mother Barat was in no hurry to make the foundation at Cannington, whilst Berrymead was still struggling with its first difficulties, and whilst necessary funds and suitable subjects were wanting for both houses; but circumstances forced it upon her. One evening in October, 1843, when she had just returned from a visit to the convent at Amiens, Dr Morris, Bishop of Troy (*in partibus*), who in the previous year had taken deeply to heart the welfare of the Society in England, called at the Rue de Varenne, and told her he had come to Paris to receive and escort to England the religious destined for Cannington, and also to obtain from her some more subjects for Berrymead. He added that he intended leaving Paris in a couple of days, and that there was therefore no time to be lost. This announcement was a very surprising one, and amongst other difficulties which it created was one that seemed insuperable: Mother Charlotte Goold, who was to be the Superior at Cannington, was acting as Secretary General, and as it did not seem possible that she could be spared just then, Mother Barat intended to postpone the foundation until the following spring. However, Dr Morris would hear of no delay, still less put up with a refusal. He declared his intention of remaining in Paris till his request was complied with, saying that he had come to fetch the nuns, and would not depart without them. Neither would he leave the house that evening without an express promise from Mother Barat that she would give him Mother Goold and the other persons necessary. After a hard struggle with her feelings, Mother Barat yielded, and his lordship took his leave.

To Mother Goold herself the announcement was a thunderclap. She had been to Cannington the previous year, and knew that, at that time, she was destined for the foundation, but it seemed out of the question now, not only on account of her secretaryship, but because she had completely lost her voice. Whilst all around her were expecting her nomination, she was occupied with fervent thanksgivings for having escaped the burden of superiority, and said many prayers for those who were

called to make the sacrifice of their Superior, and their second home. These dreams were, however, rudely dispelled on the morning of Friday, October 20th, when the truth was made known to her; the necessary preparations were got through in haste, and on Sunday the 22nd, the colony started for England. During this short interval Mother Goold had visited Conflans, to make over some papers to Mother Cahier, who was to succeed her as Secretary General. She arrived there during dinner, and entered the refectory just as words were being read which must have had a special meaning for her at that moment: "*Teresa and five ducats is little enough to make a foundation; but Teresa, five ducats, and God, is a great deal.*"

Mother Bazire, who was to accompany Mother Goold as Assistant, no more expected her orders for England than the rest. She had just returned to Paris from Lemberg, and in the course of one year had seen New York, Vienna, and Paris, to which she was now to add London. Mother Clifford, who was destined for Cannington, went with them, and there were also religious for Berrymead. Dr Morris took charge of the whole party. They left Paris as the afternoon was drawing to a close, with a long night's journey in the *diligence* before them. They arrived at Beauvais about midnight, and were to meet there a lay-sister for Berrymead. She was a simple country girl, who amused them by declaring she had never seen before either a bishop or a *diligence*, and was very anxious for the morning that she might know what they were like.

The day after their arrival at Berrymead, Mother Bazire began her retreat, and it was proposed that the foundresses should start for Cannington as soon as it was finished. However, Lord Clifford's great desire that every thing should be ready in time, had led to the work of the alterations being done too hastily. Parts had to be taken down and done over again, and he begged the nuns to postpone their arrival until the feast of St. Stanislaus. As Cannington was to be the novitiate of the Society in England, the day was an appropriate one. It was not, however, until the evening of November 15th that the colony arrived at the station at Bridgewater, travelling by

the newly-opened Great Western Railway from Paddington. The bells of the Protestant church were rung, and the village band played till nearly midnight in honour of their arrival.

After a few months' experience, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Goold: "What can I say of your last letter, dear Charlotte, except that it was the will of some persons that we should go to Cannington, but not the will of our Lord, for He gave me a prevision of what would happen." Indeed from the very first every imaginable and unimaginable difficulty beset the path of those whose one desire it was to plant the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart in that village. The three nuns might have felt themselves lonely enough as the sole occupants of the thirty-six cells into which the Benedictine nuns had divided the once large rooms of Court House, but the Blessed Sacrament was there, and was their great solace. Yet even this consolation was marred by the sad state of neglect into which they found that every thing connected with the sacristy had fallen since the departure of the nuns, and one of Mother Goold's first and most pressing cares was to provide fresh altar-linen and vestments, so that every thing connected with the service of the altar should be befitting.

A poor school was already established, and under favourable circumstances this work might easily have been united with that of the noviceship. It was immediately undertaken, but only a small proportion of the forty children were Catholics, and the teaching was hampered in several ways.

If there were difficulties with regard to the poor school, there were greater difficulties as to the noviceship. No vocations were forthcoming. Mother Clifford was named sub-mistress of the future novices, but two lay-sisters, and one choir postulant who did not persevere, could not constitute a noviceship. The spiritual help was of the most meagre description. There was no chaplain, and the confessor of the Franciscan nuns at Taunton came, every ten days, a distance of thirty miles to hear the confessions.

Besides the family of Lord Clifford there were only two houses in the neighbourhood of the convent occupied by

Catholic gentry. The prospects were not bright, and did not grow brighter as time went on; all the efforts made to make way against so many difficulties were misunderstood and ineffectual. Ignorance and prejudice baffled all conciliatory measures, and anonymous letters proved that an enemy was at work, who could not be met in fair field and open day. In April, 1844, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Goold: "I was obliged to send you to Cannington, on account of the promise made to your cousin, but the Society is too poor to allow it to support this house, as the whole expense falls on us, and there are no results. We must put an end to this, and I shall decide on the spot. I am weighed down with anxiety and care. Oh, how I regret not having been firm in my refusal. Believe me, this foundation was against all reason and prudence. I saw and understood it at once, but others did not share my opinion. . . . As you see, our good Master does not leave me without a cross; when we are out of one trouble, another comes. I do not refuse to suffer if our Lord will give me strength, but do not stop praying."

Mother Goold was not likely to stop praying, and as the difficulties and isolation of her position increased, so also did her prayer. There was a little tribune adjoining her room and opening into the chapel, and in this long hours of the night were passed. In the latter months at Cannington a great increase of physical suffering was added to her usual infirmities, the beginning in fact of the malady that ended only with her life.

On May 19th, Mother Barat wrote again: "If our good Master gives me health sufficient, in spite of the trials He sends me, I count always on coming to see you. Our Mothers are full of fears about this journey for me, and do their best to oppose my plan. Is it God or the devil that tries to hinder my coming? I cannot make out. Pray, dear Charlotte, as fervently as you can, to obtain for me light and grace to do only what God wills, and as He wills."

From the beginning of May, 1844, the hope of seeing their Superior General had brought much joy to all at Berrymead.

The school was increasing very slowly, and at this time numbered only fifteen children, but still the work did progress, and was far from being hopeless, like that at Cannington.

Mother Barat left Paris at the end of May, with Mother d'Avenas, and after staying two days at Beauvais, continued her journey to a country house near Abbeville, where she had been invited to break it. Here Dr. Morris, who had left London for the purpose on May 30th, met her. "The following morning," writes Mother d'Avenas, "we went to the tribune, whilst waiting for the Bishop's Mass. The peasants were flocking into church. Suddenly our Mother General left my side, and the next minute I saw her, to my surprise, kneeling in the bench behind Dr Morris, who was preparing for Mass. She was making her confession to him, and that before so many people! We left immediately after our thanksgiving." From Berrymead, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Goold: "We arrived the day before yesterday, after the most delightful crossing. When I found myself on English ground, I thought with great joy that I shall see you soon. In fact, as soon as our great feast is over, I shall think of Cannington; but as I wish to see your cousin, I must make my journey coincide with his arrival. I am longing to see you, and how much we shall have to talk over! Alas, things are rather sad than consoling, I fear; but as all comes from the will of God, we must accept all alike, must we not?"

The feast of the Sacred Heart fell on June 14th, and there was a ceremony of clothing and first vows that day at Berrymead. On June 16th, Mother Barat left for Cannington, where trials of every kind had been thickening of late, until, in spite of the generous kindness of Lord Clifford, the position of the nuns became almost unbearable. Mother Barat again discussed the whole matter thoroughly with Mother Goold, until she quite satisfied herself that the right course was to suppress a house that offered no fruit for the present and no hopes for the future. The decision once taken, prompt action was best, and on June 20th, Mother Barat left Cannington with Mother Goold and two others. Mother Clifford stayed

behind, to break the news to her father, but a fortnight later, she also, with Mother Bazire and the rest of the little community, arrived at Berrymead. Lord Clifford was deeply grieved. It was a frustration of the hopes of years, but he looked higher than mere personal considerations, and not a word of reproach escaped his lips. He considered it all in the light of God's will ; his aim had been, he said, to help to bring the Society of the Sacred Heart into England. This was his object in offering the *pied-à-terre* at Cannington. This end had been accomplished by other means. His mission, therefore, and ours at Cannington, were fulfilled.

A week after her return to Berrymead, Mother Barat left England, but not until she had organized every thing in the house, and installed Mother Goold as Superior and Mistress of Novices. On her way to Paris, she wrote from Lille to Mother Thérèse Maillucheau : "I have been to England, and had anxious work to get through. It would take too long to tell you all, and I must say shortly that I have suppressed Cannington, and joined the community to that of Berrymead. These two foundations were like two birds that had only one wing apiece. Now Berrymead will have two, and will be able to fly." Her visit, short as it was, had been long enough to win the hearts of the children, and from this time the school increased more rapidly.

CHAPTER XXXVII

IN ITALY. 1845.

Mercy, indeed, was born with him [St. Francis], but it received a two-fold increase by the infused charity of Christ, for truly his soul melted within him at the sight of poverty and sickness, and the comfort which his hand was unable to bestow, he gave by the affection of his heart.—ST. BONAVENTURE.

ON her return from England, Mother Barat visited Jette and Lille, but rapidly, for she was anxious to reach Amiens, where Mother Henriette Ducis was dying. Mother Ducis was another of those companions of Mother Barat's early religious life, of whom death was, year by year, depriving her, and from each of whom it was so hard a wrench to part. "My tears fall fast, as I write," she said, in answer to the letter that told her of this fresh sorrow. "Oh, that my first daughters — the daughters of my early years — could be given back to me!"

Mother Ducis was longing for her arrival. On the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, she asked to be carried to the room which Mother Barat had long occupied, and leant her head against the bed where she had rested, as if to rest herself with the thoughts which the sight of the room called forth. Mother Barat came a few days later, but was obliged to leave again before Mother Ducis' happy death. Shortly before her agony began, she sang, to bring a smile upon the sorrowful faces around her. The only things she could find for which to beg pardon of her Sisters were her outbursts of irrepressible merriment. Her death was a fitting end to a long life in religion, entered upon so brightly, that those who, not knowing her, saw her radiant happiness when she was on her way to

Amiens, in 1804, to enter the noviceship, could only conclude that she was going to her wedding.

In April of this year, 1844, Mother Barat had lost also Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud and Mother Antoinette de Gramont. Of these and many other holy deaths that took place about this time, amongst the best beloved of her daughters, Mother Barat wrote: "What losses for us, but how calm, how full of hope were their deaths! Oh, it is sweet to die in the Sacred Heart!" "Our Lord takes the best," she wrote again, when she heard of the death of Father Varin's niece, Mother Aglaë Varin, at Montet. "At least, we who are left must do double work, and make haste to grow holy, that we may deserve also to enter upon our rest." "Our very pillars are taken away," she exclaimed, on hearing of the death, at Pignerol, of the Superior of that house, Mother Clara Quirin. "However, we must not lose heart. These holy souls will pray for us, and our Lord will send His Spirit upon our young generation." The first novice sent from Roscrea to Conflans died there after a few months of noviceship. "I had no idea one could be happy on such a day," she said. Her happiness was indeed radiant, and to express it, she sang the *Salve Regina* after receiving the last sacraments.

In October, Mother Barat left Paris for Rome, visiting on the way La Ferrandière, Annonay, and Avignon, and lastly Aix, in Provence, where she was kept for some time by a dangerous illness. As soon as she had recovered sufficiently, she pressed on and embarked at Marseilles for Cività Vecchia. A foundation had been made the previous year at Genoa, and as the steamboat, *Mongibello*, touched at that port Mother Barat was able to spend a few hours amongst her daughters there. She found the Palazzo Grimaldi, now a convent of the Sacred Heart, beautiful within and without, but its great rooms full of pictures by the Old Masters, its marble balconies, Venetian pavements, and fine gardens were out of keeping with the purpose to which it was now applied, and Mother Barat's only consolation when she saw its grandeur was to find that the community were established in small and inconvenient rooms,

an abode suitable to her much-loved poverty and simplicity. Her object in this journey to Rome was to consult the Cardinal Protector on various points connected with the Society: the complete return to the Statutes of 1826, putting an end to the temporary measures adopted of late, and the adjournment of the General Congregation which the increasing antagonism of the Archbishop of Paris, made it difficult to convene. It was not without anxiety that she entered Italy. Mother de Limminghe's well-known views with regard to the questions agitated in the Society in 1839, and since, and her resignation of her office as Assistant General had given rise to very unpleasant rumours of disaffection, and it was even reported that she wished to separate the Italian houses from the rest of the Society, and become their Superior General. These reports had reached Paris, but Mother Barat did not give them credit. Yet the mere knowledge that these things were said, put into her correspondence with Mother de Limminghe a tinge of sorrow, for which the latter could not account. Her eyes were opened at last by Cardinal Lambruschini, who, distressed at finding the reports spreading, asked her whether there was any truth in them. The touching letter in which she tells Mother Barat of this visit is thoroughly open and deeply humble. Her defence is that of one who is accused of a thing that had never crossed her mind. Its very energy shows her affection for Mother Barat and the Society. It was a most painful expiation of her fault, and as such she looked upon it. "I loved her too much," she often exclaimed, "and God has allowed this suffering that I might expiate it." But notwithstanding these rumours, Mother Barat found perfect loyalty to herself and the Society in each one of the Italian houses.

The novices at the Villa Lante had left the small house for the *palazzo*, lower down the hill, and a Gothic chapel had been built since her last visit. Amongst the postulants was a pupil of Montet, Mary O'Mahony, who had been sent to Rome in the hope that the southern climate would arrest the disease that had attacked her lungs. But the change had done her no good, and as each day the end drew nearer, Mother

Barat watched with the most motherly affection over her dying child. She gave her the habit and white veil of the novices, allowed her to make her vows, and herself prepared her for her holy and happy death, which took place on February 28th, 1845. When four years later the Garibaldians rifled the convent and even the graves of the nuns, Mary O'Mahony's body was found in a wonderful state of preservation.

The spring was spent at the Trinità, and Mother Barat devoted herself to the children. She re-established amongst them a Junior School, and by way of encouragement for mistresses and children, told them she would be their Mistress General. "It is a pleasant make-believe for me," she said. Another incident by which this visit left its mark at the Trinità, was her kindness to a dumb animal. We read of Mother Barat, in her very early years, that when she went out walking, upon the hills round Joigny, with any one who was carrying a gun to shoot the birds, she would say at each shot a "Hail Mary," that the bird might escape, and the same pitiful compassion showed itself always throughout her life. She could never bear to see animals hardly used. Once she saw a lay-sister strike one needlessly. She inquired her name and added: "She will not stay in the Society; she is not good-hearted." And the event justified her words.

The Sister in charge of the farmyard at the Trinità used to come daily, when she saw Mother Barat in the garden, to give an account of every thing, but once she had so dismal a tale to tell that she scarcely ventured to approach, and only by dint of questioning did the whole story come out. As space was scanty, a kid and a donkey were tethered at night in the same shed, though at a good distance apart, but this night the donkey had broken loose and attacked the kid, who was found in the morning more dead than alive. "Bichette refuses all food," the Sister added sadly. Mother Barat went to the shed and sat down by the poor kid, which was lying quite still in a corner. As soon as it heard her it recognized her voice, and looked at her with plaintive bleatings. "Go quickly," Mother Barat said, "and get some meal and milk." She put the mess in the

hollow of her hand, and the kid took it readily. It would take food from no one else, and for several days she fed it in the same way. In the middle of her work, writing or reading letters, she would look at her watch, and start up, saying: "Bichette must be hungry: I will be back directly." When it was on its feet again, the kid showed its gratitude on every occasion, after its own fashion, even making its way to Mother Barat's room when she was ill.

It was remarked that as she grew in sanctity Mother Barat seemed to share the power possessed by some of the saints over the brute creation. Her charity was so widespread, so expansive, that animals, as God's handiwork, could not but share in it, and they certainly had an instinctive attraction towards her, and trust in her. It was remarked at the Trinità that birds that flew away from every one else were tame with her. Two lambs, that on the feast of St. Agnes had been solemnly blessed, were given to the nuns to be kept till Easter according to the usual custom. Skittish as they usually were, they would follow her patiently and meekly whilst she went slowly about the garden paths in prayer, or looking at the fruit-trees, stopping when she stopped, moving when she moved, but never leaving her. The big dog belonging to the Villa Lante used to make a daily excursion on his own account to the Trinità, when she had removed there. He would wait at the gate for an opportunity to get in, and once inside would look everywhere for the Mother General, until he found her; then a pat from her hand, and a bit of biscuit, contented him, and he went off happy. At the Villa Lante he was fierce, but at the Trinità gentle and well-behaved.

It was at this time that a postulant, Mdlle Perdrau, painted on the wall of one of the corridors at the Trinità a fresco representing our Blessed Lady in the Temple. The painting was at first called the *Madonna del Giglio*, but afterwards, *Mater Admirabilis*. The picture is now well known, as in every convent of the Sacred Heart there is a copy of it, and our Lady under this title is taken as the patroness of the school-life of the children. The corridor where the original painting

exists is now a chapel, and many miraculous answers to prayer have been obtained there.

Mdlle Perdrau had come to Rome to study painting, but from the love of art she was led to fix her heart on the Supreme Beauty, God, and to consecrate her life to Him. Before she took the habit of the Society of the Sacred Heart, she spent some time at Assisi in a little Franciscan convent, of which she has left us a description redolent of the exquisite fragrance of the Franciscan virtues in all their primitive perfection. The nuns, called the *Poverette del Giglio*, were twenty-five in number, and their tiny enclosure might have been taken in very truth for the domain of "Lady Poverty." So completely were they cut off from the world, that the faintest echoes of its noisiest deeds scarcely found an entrance amongst them. In 1842, all they knew of Napoleon was that "a great conqueror, a second Nabuchodonosor, had arisen early in the century, and, after sweeping like a whirlwind over the land, had laid sacrilegious hands upon the Pope, and carried him off to his capital, a town called Paris." There were no inns at Assisi, and pilgrims sought hospitality in the religious houses, and thus it was that Mdlle Perdrau and another lady who were at Assisi in August, 1842, for the Indulgence of the Portiuncula, were admitted into the interior of the convent. It was rather destitution than poverty that they found there, as far as the goods of earth are concerned, but a richness of heavenly gifts, a wonderful abundance of the joy that only the very purest of the pure of heart can taste here below, a cordial charity that made their company like that of angels, while all was beautified, ennobled, and sanctified by their life of love, and closest union with their Lord, whose presence in their lowly tabernacle was their abiding source of peace and joy. If it was a life of love, it was also a life of labour, for the *Poverette* were always busy. Their chief occupation and means of livelihood were derived from the care of all that appertained to the sacristy of the Friars of the *Sacro Convento*, who serve the Basilica that enshrines the body of St. Francis.

At the *Giglio* the time was marked by hour-glasses, and

each time the glass was turned the religious saluted our Lady and the Holy Angels, and asked forgiveness for all the sins committed in the world during the time just passed. A rare holiday occasionally broke the even tenor of their life, and Mdlle Perdrau went with them all, on more than one of these occasions. The object of the excursion was always to visit some spot in the neighbourhood, hallowed by associations in the life of St, Francis or St. Clare.

In March, 1845, my postulantship had come to an end [writes Mdlle Perdrau], but the doctor at the Trinità prescribed mountain air before I took the habit, and it was decided that I should spend some time at the convent *del Giglio*. I went on the eve of my departure to bid good-bye to our Mother General, and she asked me many questions about my dear *Poverette*. She was deeply touched, her eyes filled with tears, and she sent for the Superior of the Trinità, the Procuratrix, and Sister Marie: "Give me every thing you can," she said, "for some poor nuns who belong to the Heart of our Lord." She was soon surrounded by offerings, but was not satisfied. It ended by her parting with every thing she had. "I do not know what to do," said Sister Marie, "Reverend Mother takes every thing that I have, and gives all that she has."

On the 23rd of May, Mother Barat had her farewell audience of Gregory XVI., and on the 10th of June she left Rome with Mother de Limminghe, Mother Cahier, Mother Perdrau, and Sister Marie. She had thought of visiting the *Poverette*, but gave up the plan, though Mother Perdrau, in writing of this to the Superior, had mentioned the day when Mother Barat would be at Spoleto.

The journey was made in *vettura* by slow stages. The *vetturino* was a man named Giorgio, whose sympathies were at first entirely confined to his horses, but Mother Barat soon won his confidence by her tender compassion for them, shown practically by her willingness to pay over and above the stipulated sum for the hire of oxen to help them up the steep roads over the Apennines.

It was early on a glorious summer morning that, having spent the night at Spoleto, the travellers were descending the

hill on the road towards Foligno. Mother Barat according to her wont said the Litany of our Lady as soon as they started, then every one began her meditation. "When we came in sight of the mountain on whose side Assisi nestles, I confess," Mother Perdrau writes, "that I had a distraction. 'Assisi!' I exclaimed. Mother Barat looked up. 'What a sacrifice,' she said sighing, 'not to go and see my children the *Poverette*. I will tell you why I do not go; I should never have the strength to tear myself away again. Such a place would have been Heaven on earth for me, but.... Well let us pay our respects to the relics of St. Francis and St. Clare,' and she went on with her prayers.... Before long, our *vetturino* drew up his horses. We looked out to see what the obstacle was, and found that our road was blocked by a carriage containing a number of nuns. I had scarcely recognized them as the *Poverette*, before the Superior, surrounded by her daughters, was at the door of our carriage. She got into it with two of her daughters, and two of us went with the other *Poverette*, and thus we continued our way to Foligno. We reached it about ten o'clock, and were to stop there during the heat of the day. The *locanda*, like all the inns in Umbria, was an extremely poor one, and for once Mother Barat, who in general made very light of all the discomforts of travelling, was sorry for the wretchedness of the place. She would have liked to give honourable entertainment to her new family, but her welcome made up for all deficiencies. Much had to be compressed into a few hours, and with hearts so open and so simple this was not difficult."

Mother Barat was anxious to sanctify this memorable day on which the *Poverette del Giglio* and the Society of the Sacred Heart contracted an alliance that was to be indissoluble. She spoke to them in burning words of the evil and sin so rife in France and Italy, and the iniquities of the whole world that steeped the Sacred Heart in sorrow. She showed how, to repair for these sins, and to oppose a barrier to the machinations of the spirit of darkness, it was necessary that a religious Society should devote itself to the glory of God and the

salvation of souls, and she spoke of the sacrifice God was always asking of her for this end, of her well-nigh irresistible longing for a life of silence, absolute poverty, and solitude. "The sight of your life," she said to them, "hidden in God with Jesus Christ, arouses in me desires which forty-five years of struggle have not been able to obliterate. God prevented me from visiting your little convent; I should not have had courage to leave it again."

As Mother Barat spoke, the hearts of the *Poverette* took in all the sublimity of a vocation which makes so complete a sacrifice of the natural bent of the disposition, and the wish to share her labours rose within them.

"By joining ourselves to you," Mother Barat said when she saw this, "our souls will be refreshed at the spring of living water that rises in the *Giglio;* they will taste of the impression of peace and joy, given by the mere recollection of your life. We shall offer to our Lord your isolation, your annihilation, to make up for the rush of life into which the interests of His glory cast us. You, my children, will offer Him your prayers, your mortifications, that He may bless our works and sanctify the instruments He deigns to use. Your hands will be raised to heaven, while we are fighting on the plain, and may our Lord be pleased to grant us to share and share alike with you in the honour of the victory."

The treaty of a mutual interchange of prayers and good works then made was preserved inviolate, and though when the day was passed, Mother Barat was obliged to part from the *Poverette* to pursue her journey, the friendship between them and the Society of the Sacred Heart has never been broken off. Mother Barat was fond of citing them as models, and she always relied on their prayers.

Another object Mother Barat had in this journey was to visit St. Elpidio, a small town beautifully situated between the Apennines and the Adriatic, along whose shore the latter part of their way had led them. After spending two days there, she went on to Loretto, where there was also by this time a convent of the Sacred Heart. The foundation of Loretto had

been made in the course of the year 1840, and she looked to it to be a safeguard against the dangers that then threatened her Institute. "I shall be more at ease about the future of the Society," she wrote, "when it is under our Lady's motherly mantle."

On June 25th, she was at Parma, and, after a few days there, went on to Turin.

Giorgio, the *vetturino*, had by this time come to venerate her deeply. "Heaven must be worth going to," he said, "if people like this are to be met there! . . . She is just my idea of a saint," and on this plea, when they arrived at the inns for the night, he would bestir himself to obtain for her the best accommodation the poor *locanda* could afford. It was by no means easy to satisfy him on this head. Mother Barat certainly did not second his efforts to get the best of every thing. She treasured the manifold discomforts of such a journey as some compensation for the lack of community life and regular hours, and it was her maxim that "any thing penitential is a gain for a religious."

They started generally at daybreak, and when Giorgio heard a far-off church bell, he would draw Mother Barat's attention to it with: "*Ecco una Messa.*" He knew she received Communion every day; but if it was late before a church was reached would sometimes suggest to her to break her fast. "It is too late now," he would say. "To-morrow will be time enough." Mother Barat would thank him, and then laugh heartily at the idea of this self-constituted director. When oxen were added to drag the carriage uphill, as they could not go beyond a foot-pace, Mother Barat and her companions often walked. Giorgio would then offer her his arm, and she accepted to please him, and to have the opportunity of saying an encouraging word that might prove useful. On their arrival at Turin, he went to his duties in fulfilment of a promise made on the journey, and Mother Barat gave him a watch. But he held it in his hand without seeing it, for his eyes were brimming over with tears at the prospect of the parting; he would have wished to drive her to her journey's end.

All *vetturini* were not like Giorgio, but all came under the action of Mother Barat's gentle charity. Once her travelling companion drew her attention to a fact, made only too apparent by the unsteady driving, and the difficulty with which the driver kept his seat. "Nothing of the kind," said Mother Barat. "You have no right to say such a thing. The poor man has had a bad night, and cannot keep awake." She was soon undeceived, however, but not before the pole of the carriage had been sacrificed to her charity.

One evening on their journey, when their road led by the shore of the Adriatic, they left the carriage for awhile, and spent a little time on the beach, against which the smooth water was lapping in tiny wavelets. They said the Rosary and the *Ave Maris Stella*, and then some amongst them sent the flat pebbles skimming over the calm surface of the summer sea in "ducks and drakes." As Mother Barat, who perhaps even joined in the amusement, watched them, the words, "Little stones go to Greece," showed the current of her thoughts, while her eyes sought on the far horizon some faint outline of the shores, that had always had a fascination for her since the early days when her studies, at first so irksome, became by degrees full of interest. When the thought of Greece and of her studies came back to her, as we know it did during this journey, there must have been mingled with it much thought of her brother, and many prayers for him, for he was ill in Paris, and her great hope was that she might reach her journey's end in time to see him once again. But this was not to be, and when she arrived at Turin she heard of his death. He died blessing her and her Society, and in great peace, in spite of his protracted suffering.

Mother Barat wrote of this to Mother de Gramont: "I knew it was coming, and yet what grief the news brought with it! My being so far off makes it all the more painful. I did so long to see him once more, and had prayed so hard that he might live till my return. My prayers were not granted, and I have to bear my sacrifice without any alleviation, that is as far as this life is concerned; of course supernaturally I

have the comfort of a well-grounded hope of the happiness so faithful a soul must now be enjoying in Heaven. I was very grateful for the blessing he sent me. We must pray for the repose of his soul. If, as we presume, he does not need our prayers, others will profit by them."

Mother Barat arrived at Lyons on August 5th. Mother Geoffroy, "our Moses on the mountain," as she called her, referring to her life of constant prayer, had passed to her reward. She had died in May of that year at the age of eighty-three. Her one joy at the end of her life was in perfect conformity to the will of God. "I thank Him," she said, "for the past, the present, the future. Our life ought to be continual thanksgiving."

After short visits to Besançon and to Montet, Mother Barat went on to Kienzheim, whither Mother Coppens and Mother Emma de Bouchaud, elder sister of Mother Eulalie, had transferred the noviceship from Montet. Kienzheim is a charming place about five miles from Colmar. The Black Forest bounds the horizon to the east, and on the west an undulating landscape stretches away to the Vosges mountains. The house stands in a valley, well-watered, and so thickly studded with villages that the chimes that ring so gaily from the church steeples have won for it the name of the "Valley of the Bells."

They showed Mother Barat in the garden the first chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament had been reserved for awhile on their arrival. "This then is the grain of mustard-seed that has grown into a great tree," she said to the novices, "and you are the birds of the air that have come to take shelter under its branches. But birds of the air do not like being on the ground. They scarcely do more than touch it in search of food, and then they fly up again. We too must soar above earthly affections: let us rise to our Lord and fix our abode in His Sacred Heart."

"There is an abundant harvest to be gathered in here, not only in Alsace but over the frontier," she said to them another day. "St. Teresa, from the depths of her solitude, included

the whole world in her longing to win souls to our Lord. Our hearts must not be less wide than hers."

On her way back to Paris she stopped at Nancy and at Metz, and reached Conflans on September 17th.

The long journey, thus happily ended, had given her the assurance that her Society had not only increased numerically, but was more strongly knit together than before. The spirit, like the Rule, was the same everywhere. All the communities she had visited had felt the influence of the ardent zeal, that had led her, before she left Rome, to write the following remarkable passage: "Let there be no more stopping in our onward course on the road to sanctity. Let us give ourselves up to the good pleasure of God and to His love. Cultivate your pupils; implant in them an enlightened piety, based upon faith and the fear of God. There must be a counterpoise to the love of pleasure, and where should the children find it but in the Sacred Heart? Make them "valiant women," devoted to duty. How difficult a mission in this century! But just because it is so difficult, we ought to be all the more religious, all the more united to our Lord. Believe, that if we are satisfied with a half-and-half virtue, we shall obtain only mediocre results. Now-a-days when evil knows no compromise, and stops at nothing, why should we stop half-way in our love for our Lord and the souls He has redeemed with His Blood. There must be nothing half-and-half in our efforts after perfection!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII

AT CONFLANS. 1845–1848.

Ye, who would build the churches of the Lord,
See that ye make the western portals low!
Let no one enter who disdains to bow!
High truths profanely gazed at, unadored,
Will be abused at first, — at last abhorred;
And many a learned, many a lofty brow
Hath rested, pillowed on a humbler vow,
Than keen logicians notice or record: —
Oh, stainless peace of blest Humility!

AUBREY DE VERE.

FOR the first year after her return from Italy, Mother Barat was at Conflans, where she devoted herself, as usual, to the formation of the novices. "I am come to beg hospitality of you," she said, and when they protested that Conflans belonged to her, and not to them, she replied that she possessed nothing whatsoever, that Conflans belonged to the noviceship, "and as I am not so happy as to be a novice," she added, "I come to ask you to take me in."

Her teaching might be summed up in the words she said to them on one New Year's Day: "If you wish to be saints, you must *give* all, and you will *have* all." She said of certain novices: "They are good children, but they cannot get on without papa and mama, and this, even in spite of a vocation! We do really live in times when nature has the upper hand of grace. Feeling is all in all. What are we to do with anything so limp?" She taught them to begin to love their relations on earth as the saints love one another in Heaven. "The separation from home and friends is the hardest trial to nature," she said once, "and this is why the postulantship is the most trying time; this sacrifice once made, the others cost next to nothing.

The crucifix is there, and brings us comfort always and in every thing." But we strike root very easily, and the trial is renewed when the time comes to part from the noviceship or community, which has become, as it were, a second home. One day, when several novices were, by obedience, to leave Conflans for another house of the Society, Mother Barat announced this to the rest, and said: "We will make our sacrifice in a bright spirit, dear children, and celebrate it by a little festival, as the martyrs of old had their *agapæ*, before going to suffer for the name of Christ."

This was what Mother Barat meant by *giving* all; what she meant by *having* all was possessing our Lord, by living in close union with Him. When speaking to the novices of the necessity of this interior spirit, she said: "Like the sacramental species, you must be yourselves only in appearance, but the substance underlying the accidents must be our Lord Himself." Love was to work this miracle: "Sanctity does not mean being canonized, but it means great love of God," she said. One day, when some novices were walking in the full glare of a burning sun, Mother Barat told them to go into the shade. "I do not want you to be burnt up with any fire but that of the love of God," she said, and then, turning to the rest, inquired what fuel was the best to supply this flame. Each one answered in her own way, and Mother Barat, when she had heard all, quoting St. Ignatius, told them it was the *wood of the Cross.*

On one occasion she said: "Henry IV. reproached one of his famous generals for having allowed the Duke of Savoy to construct a fortress that threatened the French frontier. The General admitted the strength of the position, but said that his reason for letting the enemy fortify it thus was that he intended to make it a defence instead of a danger by taking possession of the stronghold for his master, the King of France. Our defects," Mother Barat continued, "are forts which our enemy holds to molest us. We must make ourselves masters of them by undermining the walls. We shall take them by humility, and offer them in homage to our King and Leader."

Humility was indeed what Mother Barat valued above all else. "I do not think," she wrote in 1839, "that we shall be trusted with any wonderful supernatural favours; there would be few amongst us simple and humble enough to be led by that way. I do not ask it for any one; it might be a danger. It is a loss, but I prefer humility." Yet, just when these words were written, Marie Lataste, a simple and humble soul was beginning to receive wonderful graces of the kind to which they referred, and was to be led by these graces a few years later into the Sacred Heart. She was amongst the lay-sister novices at Conflans at the time of Mother Barat's return from Italy in 1845.

Marie Lataste was a peasant girl from the Landes. She was born in 1822, at Mimbaste, near Dax, the country of St. Vincent of Paul. She had been brought up by her good and hard-working parents to lead a toilsome and poor life, like their own, and she never left their roof until she went to Paris to enter the noviceship at Conflans. Marie's mother had taught her three daughters all she knew herself, to read and write, to spin and sew, but her schooling had ended when she was ten years old, and their stock of worldly knowledge was but scanty.

The two eldest were easily trained, but Marie had an unusual share of childish waywardness and indocility; as she grew older she was a shy and silent child, more than ever ill at ease with herself and her surroundings. But her First Communion was a turning-point, and from that time she made marked and constant efforts to overcome the many difficulties caused by her pride and self-will. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament began that transformation of her life and character which was completed by our Lord Himself. From the year 1839, she was in constant communication with Him, yet so simple was she that she did not look on this as any special privilege, but took it for granted that many others saw and heard what she did.

She spoke of these things, however, only to her confessor, the parish priest of Mimbaste, who, after trying her in various

ways by testing her obedience and humility, to discover whether what she told him was or was not the result of her own fancies, consulted a holy and learned priest, professor of theology at the Seminary at Dax, and by his advice, Marie was told to commit every thing to writing. It was a Herculean task for the poor girl, who scarcely knew how to write at all, but she began it under obedience, and carried it through from the same motive. To accomplish it, she rose early and watched late, often through nearly the whole night, that during the day she might be at her usual work in her father's farm. She kept her secret inviolably, even from those she loved best. But after awhile her writings began to be talked about, having been pronounced by competent authorities, to contain nothing contrary to faith, and to be of their nature such as to produce great good; and a publicity was given to them which was very painful to their author. The desire to live unknown in religious life grew stronger in her soul, and she was attracted, as it were irresistibly, to the Society of the Sacred Heart, though her desire met only with opposition from all who knew her. But Marie, urged by a strength that was not her own, would be daunted by no obstacle. Her elder sister was a Sister of Charity in Paris; she resolved to go to her, and, when there, to present herself at the convent of the Sacred Heart to ask for admittance as a lay-sister. Her good parents, when they saw her so resolved, withdrew their opposition, and thought only of providing her with an outfit. Though heartbroken at losing her, they let her go.

With the simplicity of a child, Marie went to the Rue de Varenne and asked for the Superior. Mother de Boisbaudry, the Assistant, came to her and, seeing nothing in her answers or her appearance that would make her unsuitable, referred her to a Jesuit Father, who, after two interviews with Marie, recommended her to Mother Barat, and she was received. "Father Gagnard has spoken to me of a postulant lay-sister whom you already know," Mother Barat wrote to Mother Eugénie, in May, 1844, "and he says that he thinks she might suit us in spite of the way by which she is led, and that her

spirit is excellent." This reassured the Mistress of Novices, who, according to Mother Barat's directions, kept her in the beaten track of obedience and abnegation. This was just what Marie thirsted for, and she was not found wanting. From the outset she showed that her desire was, to quote her own words, "to live in the Society of the Sacred Heart as in her God and Saviour, to love Him ever more perfectly and with a closer and more intimate love." She sought only to please Him, and for His sake, to fulfil with the minutest perfection every requirement of the Rule or of obedience. "Sister Marie does every thing like every one else," was a remark made upon her by one of the lay-sisters, "but no one does any thing like her!" and from first to last those who saw most of her never forgot the impression made upon them by her obedience and humility. "What a happiness it is," she wrote from Conflans to the parish priest of Mimbaste, "to live in a community where all have but one heart and one soul to love God and serve Him faithfully!"

Later on she wrote: "Our Lord is not less good to me than He was, though He acts in a different way. All doubtful and sensible manifestations have ceased, and He leads me by a path that is simple and common, in which I enjoy the deepest peace." It was in this peace, made radiant by the first rays of the morning of eternity, that Marie gave up her soul to God, at Rennes, in May, 1847. When she entered the Society of the Sacred Heart she made over her manuscripts to the parish priest of Mimbaste, whose nephew published them some years later. At the time the book appeared Mother Barat wrote thus of it to Mother de Limminghe:

> One line about Marie Lataste. You were wrong, my child, to blame yourself for thinking as you did about her book. We have the right to examine and judge, and as long as the first authorities have not pronounced, we can say what we think. No doubt these revelations are in some respects surprising. . . . If it had depended on me I should not have ventured to publish them. Let us leave judgment upon the matter to those who have a right to pronounce, and if we like, let us take from them what may give us light and edification.

You have I think been recommended to allow this book to be read amongst us only by those whose piety you know to be enlightened and deep, and whose imagination is not easily excited.

The writings of Marie Lataste were quite unknown in the Society of the Sacred Heart until they were published, and we find nothing more positive than the passage above cited regarding them in Mother Barat's writings. Their author lived and died in religion like a saint, and there is no doubt that if her supernatural gifts were of the highest order, she was also endowed by nature with every thing that makes a character great. But though her intellect was clear and powerful, her will strong, and her imagination lively, these qualities would never explain how a girl so uneducated as she was could have produced a book like hers, which both for dogmatic and moral teaching, has excited the admiration of the best theologians of our day. Although Mother Barat's judgment with regard to the book was expressed with so much reserve, there is no doubt of her love and veneration for the soul which had so effectually hidden itself under the shadow of the Cross. "Let us learn from our Lord, and from His little disciple Marie Lataste," she wrote once to a Superior, "that sooner or later the soul wherein the Sacred Heart abides, though hidden and unknown, will arise with strength and beauty in proportion to the hiddenness of the seed." Marie Lataste's one desire was to be unknown, and God allowed, in answer as it seems to her prayers, that even the place where she was buried was uncertain for at least forty years after her death.

In July, 1846, Mother Barat left Conflans for Paris, but she was recalled after a short absence by the dangerous illness of one of the novices, Sister de Monestrol, who was suffering from an abscess on the brain. To relieve the excruciating pain, and save her life, the doctors saw no remedy but the then terrible operation of trepanning, which they did not venture to assert would be successful. The novices began a novena to St. Philomena, one of the patrons of the house, and, in the midst of it, Mother Barat arrived at Conflans. She went

directly to the patient, and began by speaking to her of confession and Holy Communion, and of her vows which she was about to take. She then told her that a violent remedy would be tried to save her life. "After that, our Reverend Mother came and bent over me," the sick person said afterwards. "She made the sign of the Cross on my forehead, and was evidently in anguish of mind. I could tell that she was praying. My head, which was burning hot, sank on her hand." At that moment a wonderful shock thrilled through the sufferer's whole frame. As she described it, it was as if boiling water were poured over her. It was instantaneous, and the effect was overpowering. She felt at that instant that she was cured. Her mind was clear, and she made her confession. Mother Barat came back to her before the Blessed Sacrament was brought to her room. "Two ways are before you, my child," she said, "earth or Heaven; choose." I know no other way," the novice answered, "than that of the will of God." Hearing this, Mother Barat felt inspired to say: "America or Heaven?" "Let it be America," the novice answered. "It will be my road to Heaven." The relics of St. Philomena were applied to her. She pronounced her vows, and received Holy Communion. "Then," she said afterwards, "the paralysis of the left side disappeared. I was able to join my hands, all pain left me, and my limbs recovered sensation. My eyes, which had been sightless, now gazed upon the landscape visible from my window. My head was relieved, and my only discomfort was a sense of oppression on the forehead, like that left by a bad headache." She slept all night, and when the three doctors came the next morning, their surprise was unbounded. It was a fact impossible to account for except by admitting that miraculous agency had been at work, and they all agreed to this. "She is not the same person she was yesterday," they said. "We will join you in your thanksgivings to God;" and they all said that they should never forget the effect the cure produced upon them.

That same day, Mother Barat went back to Paris, and before leaving reminded Sister de Monestrol that she had

contracted a great debt towards Almighty God. "I know but one coinage in which you can pay it in part," she added, "and that is by setting no bounds to your devotedness to His Heart and His Cross." She blessed her, and at this blessing the last remains of oppression disappeared. In the novice's own words: "I had a thousand times more spring and life than before I was ill." It is needless to say that Mother Barat referred all the honour to God alone; but those who had been eye-witnesses of what took place, and the whole Society of the Sacred Heart, gave thanks inwardly to our Blessed Lord, St. Philomena, and their Mother General.

Mother Barat's object in going at this time to Paris was to work at setting things at the Rue de Varenne on a more perfect footing. As heretofore the house was an anxiety to her, and she was still sometimes tempted to regret having become the purchaser of the Hotel Biron. "We are too much upon the candlestick," she wrote in 1844. "Our position there increases the ill-feeling with which so many look upon us." "We had no choice but to buy that house," she wrote in 1846, "and as we could not get rid of every thing showy about it, it gave us a false reputation. Our own quarters there are simple and poor enough, but no account is taken of this, and we are criticized as worldly, and lose many good subjects every day in consequence. It is only by imitating the poverty and simplicity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that we shall obtain His blessing."

It was sometimes said that Mother de Gramont was to be blamed for the reputation which her school had won, but Mother Barat always defended her from the imputation. "I should never leave a Superior in charge, if I knew that she had a worldly spirit," she said; "I should remove her immediately. It is a calumny to say this of Mother Eugénie. No one is more religious. She is hard upon herself, and will use nothing but what is poor. No one is so good to the poor, or sacrifices herself more for their sake."

When Mother Barat went from Conflans in July, 1846, to take up her abode at the Rue de Varenne, it was in the hope that the local difficulties which the troubles of the previous

years had left behind, would not withstand the influence of daily and hourly intercourse. Her position there was one that called into play all her tact, but her delicate intuition was not at fault, and no long time had passed before she had won the hearts of all her daughters. She made it clear that she was not there in any sense as standing between Mother de Gramont and the community. Every one was to seek their directions or orders from their Superior only. "I am much less indulgent than Mother Eugénie," she used to say. "She is the *refugium peccatorum*. You must go to her for every thing."

There were trials without, as well as within, and she was at this time deprived of any help from the members of the Society of Jesus. Mgr Affre had always looked upon the Jesuits with dislike and mistrust, and now when public opinion, or rather the noisy minority, was again covering them with abuse, the attitude of the Archbishop of Paris increased their difficulties. The religious of the Sacred Heart in the diocese of Paris were forbidden henceforth to have recourse to them for spiritual direction, retreats, &c., and were thus deprived of the help that was most in accordance with the spirit of their Institute. "I am much distressed at this prohibition coming from the Archbishop," Mother Barat wrote in her journal. "What troubles it will cause! God knows them: that is enough. He is our Father, and if He punishes us, we must believe it is in love, and because He wills to purify us." She spared no pains to obtain a reversal of the sentence, but her personal interviews with the Archbishop, as well as all other measures, proved equally fruitless. She wrote to Mother de Rozeville:

I cannot tell you what we have to suffer, but it would be cowardly to complain. Our Lord will recognize as His true spouses only those who bear the marks of the treatment He Himself received, and as we cannot hope to shed our blood for Him, we must make up for this by the martyrdom of the soul. I wish we all understood this truth, but to understand it is not enough. We must relish it, take it to heart, love it, and practise it! I cannot give you an idea [she wrote to Mother Linminghe], what we have to bear on all sides, so go on praying. The Society is rejected everywhere on account of its name.

In Germany they will have nothing to say to us, and at Pisa, riots are got up to prevent our setting foot in the town. Really all these intrigues show the weakness of the Governments, which are afraid of a few women. We are actually bugbears to them. It is ridiculous, and yet one cannot laugh, because the devil makes capital out of it to hinder good being done. It is "his hour, and the power of darkness." Every kind of error and evil passson are let loose on all sides with inconceivable violence.

One of Mother Barat's sorrows of the year 1846, was the loss of the great Pope Gregory XVI., who died on June 1st. It was with a strong and sad foreboding that she would not see him again, that she had taken leave of him at her farewell audience, a foreboding that made her tears fall fast as she knelt afterwards at the Confession of St. Peter. But to the grief for his death succeeded very soon all the bright hopes that ushered in the reign of Pius IX. The Society of the Sacred Heart also put forth many fresh shoots, and foundations were made at Bourges, Rennes, and Montfleury in France, at Barcelona in Spain, and Gratz in Styria. The foundation at Montfleury, near Grenoble, was made on the 19th September, 1846, the day of the apparition of our Lady on the neighbouring mountain of La Salette. From the heights on which it stands, Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut is clearly visible.

The autumn was a time of anxiety at the Rue de Varenne. There was much illness, and two children died. Mother de Gramont gave herself no rest, either by night or day, and as long as any strength remained to her, she spent it all upon the children. At length the overwrought frame gave way, and Mother Eugénie took to her room, never to leave it again. She was well aware of the gravity of her state. "My course is finished," she said, and thenceforward she thought of nothing but atoning for the past and preparing for death. She made a general confession and received Extreme Unction with deep humility, and over and over again did she beg pardon of Mother Barat for all the pain she had caused her, and of the Society for the bad example she might have given. All the childlike affection and openness of happier days came back at

this last hour, and it was with the truest contrition that she implored forgiveness. "It is all these troubles that have been my death," she said to Mother Barat, who, on her knees beside her, was vainly trying to hide her tears. When she felt her agony beginning, Mother de Gramont turned again to Mother Barat, to ask for a last assurance of forgiveness, and a last blessing. Mother Barat kissed her once more, with tears streaming from her eyes. "Now I am ready," Mother de Gramont murmured; "my God, why dost Thou tarry? I am waiting for Thee. Come to deliver my soul." Before she died, she said: "I will all that God wills," and five minutes later breathed her last. It was Mother Barat's hand that closed her eyes. Sorrow for her death was widespread and very sincere in Paris. When Mother Barat saw the courageous spirit Mother de Gramont showed throughout her illness, she exclaimed: "I knew that she was good, but not how good she was, until now." "Every thing in this house speaks of her," she wrote. "How bitter it is to find only the void made everywhere by death! The hope of her happiness is the only balm to our sorrow, while the thought of her virtues both sweetens and increases it. We shall soon reach the same goal ourselves. Heaven is before us."

After this, Mother Barat took into her own hands the direction of the house in the Rue de Varenne, with Mother Emma de Bouchaud as her Assistant. She very often gave instructions to the community, in which she insisted on the perfect practice of the religious virtues, and, thanks to the sweetness and force of her words, as well as to the influence of her example, the tone of the house was thoroughly renovated.

Neither was Conflans neglected; her frequent visits were of the utmost use to the novices, and this encouragement was all the more necessary as, since the death of Mother Eulalie de Bouchaud, illness had twice made a change of Mistress necessary. Early in 1847, however, Mother Josephine Gœtz made her profession at Conflans, and Mother Barat, having discerned in her the ideal Mistress of Novices, in March of that year placed her at the head of the noviceship.

CHAPTER XXXIX

PERSECUTION. 1848–1849.

All thy old woes shall now smile on thee,
And thy pains sit bright upon thee,
All thy sorrows here shall shine,
All thy sufferings be divine;
Tears shall take comfort and turn gems,
And wrongs repent to diadems.

CRASHAW.

THE year 1848 was, as every one knows, an *Annus Mirabilis* in European history. A wave of revolution swept over every country, and worked upon thrones and dynasties the effect which an earthquake works in the material order. Mother Barat, with her long experience of the aspects of revolution, wrote from Conflans, in October, 1846: "Hell is rising up on every side. The Church, the Society, and individual souls have never had more need of prayer. We should never leave off praying." A few months later, she wrote: "We are on the eve of persecution, but I put my trust in Him who said: 'Have confidence, I have overcome the world.' May we not also take to ourselves the words: 'They will persecute you . . . for My Name's sake'? It is certain that the name we bear enrages many against us." These words proved to be prophetic, for great sufferings were in store.

The first country in which persecution began, at this time, was Switzerland. In 1847, a war broke out between the radicals and the *Sonderbund*, or league of the Catholic cantons. The latter were soon defeated, the league was dissolved, and its members had to defray the expenses of the war; the Jesuits

and other Religious Orders were banished, and a new Constitution was introduced. What Mother Barat called afterwards "a vague presentiment" had made her "take time by the forelock," and provide for the safety of her religious, before they were actually threatened. She wrote in November:

There is no longer a convent of the Sacred Heart at Montet. Switzerland, and especially the country about Fribourg, is in the hands of the radicals. The Jesuits are in exile, and our nuns dispersed into different convents. Mother Klosen is alone at Montet, in charge of the house, but we are afraid of pillage, which has already begun in the neighbourhood. Pray for this poor Switzerland and for Montet. It is very doubtful if we shall be able to return there. To try us, God allows wicked men to get the upper hand just now, but their day is a very short one, and the good will rejoice for all eternity. This thought is comforting in all trials.

A few months later, the house was, with great regret, completely abandoned, and not again occupied by the Society.

The Revolution which in February, 1848, drove Louis Philippe from the throne, was what Lamartine well called a *révolution du mépris*. The Orleans dynasty had lost all hold upon the affections of the people; it had proved itself a hopeless failure, and fell without a struggle, yet all Europe vibrated to the shock. In June, there was a second outbreak in Paris of the more extreme republicans, and, for some days, a civil war raged in the streets. Then was the time when the true nobility of Mgr Affre's character showed itself, and in the midst of the revolt, a scene was enacted which, in its calm grandeur and simplicity, seems to belong rather to the ages of faith than to the nineteenth century.

In November, 1847, Mother Barat wrote: "Our Archbishop has just told me that we may again have recourse to the Jesuits, at least on extraordinary occasions. You will understand how glad we are of this." A week before his death, Mgr Affre came to Conflans, and said to the novices: "We always need prayers, but now more than ever. I am come to ask you to pray a great deal for the Church, for France, and for me. Do not be uneasy. If the Revolution is to do us

harm it will hurt me before it attacks you. But if you hear bad news of your Archbishop, be on your guard."

When the insurrection broke out, the Archbishop resolved to make a supreme effort to prevent further bloodshed. The personal danger he would incur was of no account in his eyes. The insurgents were strongly entrenched behind barricades erected in the Place de la Bastille and the Faubourg St. Antoine, and from thence kept up a murderous fire on the National Guard, under General Cavaignac, who had been named Dictator with unlimited powers. As a preliminary, the Archbishop, making his way through Paris, which was in a state of siege and rather like a huge camp than a city, obtained the sanction of the General for what he was about to do. Then with two of his Vicars General, he pushed on to the outposts of the regular army. He obtained a cessation of the firing from the officer in charge, and advanced towards the barricades. "I shall go amongst these poor men who have been so led astray," he said. "I hope they will recognize me by my purple cassock and my pectoral cross." A green palm-branch was carried before him by a workman who had volunteered to accompany him, and with him were also his two priests. He reached the barricade in safety, and passed behind it. The insurgents ceased firing, and surrounded him in the Place de la Bastille. Every thing promised well when a stray shot was heard ; a gun went off accidentally. Instantly there was a cry : "To arms!" "The barricades!" and in a minute the firing began again. The Archbishop was then in the Faubourg St. Antoine, and by gesture and voice tried to obtain a hearing, but almost immediately he fell mortally wounded. The insurgents raised him in their arms, the firing ceased, and in sad silence they carried him to the house of the Curé.

Throughout the hours of intense pain that he yet lived, his constant prayer was that his blood might be the last shed in this sad strife, and though it was not literally fulfilled, the universal grief felt for his death, no doubt hastened the end of the hostilities. As he lay dying, he begged his secretary to convey messages of his esteem and affection to some of his

friends, and to members of several religious communities. He named the Pope's Nuncio, the Jesuits, the Sulpicians, and the nuns of the Sacred Heart. He also sent a special message of regret to Mother Barat, who from that time held in great veneration the memory of the pastor who had given his life for his sheep. In a letter written a few days later, she asked for a medal that had touched the relics of "our last martyr."

There was no attack upon the convent in Paris, and it may well be that Mother Barat's charity stood her in good stead in preventing outrage. During the disturbances at the beginning of the year, one evening a patrol party of from fifteen to twenty famished and weary men came to the door of the Rue de Varenne to beg. Mother Barat never could withstand the sight of human misery. She ordered that the meal prepared for the community should be given to them, and moreover gave each man two loaves, one of which he carried off under his arm the other on the point of his bayonet. Another day, towards nightfall, a number of insurgents carried into the courtyard of the convent a wounded comrade, lying on a stretcher, and too ill to be taken further. "God has some grace in store for this poor man," Mother Barat said when she heard of it, and she sent for the doctor and surgeon who attended the school, provided a room and bed for the wounded man, and ordered refreshments to be served to his comrades. Then with bullets whistling through the garden and striking against the shutters of the room, she took her place at his bedside, and as death seemed imminent, prayed that he might live until the priest arrived. Under her care the wounded man recovered health of soul and body. He always spoke of Mother Barat as "my Mother General," and his first feeble attempts at walking were made leaning on her arm. He received Communion in the convent chapel before he left the shelter of its roof, and when he took his leave it was with a good provision of food and clothing.

Another wounded man received the same care as the first, and often came back afterwards to beg, and never in vain. He once asked for a coat. "Give him your choir-cloak, you shall

have mine," Mother Barat said to one of her daughters, and a coat was cut out and made from the material thus provided.

Misery was rife in Paris throughout that year, and the distributions of soup and bread at the Rue de Varenne brought such crowds, that the police begged they might be discontinued, as a concourse of people was dangerous.

It was in the midst of scenes like these that news of the expulsion of her nuns from five convents in Italy reached Mother Barat. "May God's will, not ours, be done," was all she said, and with her usual calm went on giving directions about the matter in hand. "To-day persecution begins," were the words which Pius IX. uttered on the day of his coronation, and they were all the more remarkable because the advent of his reign was hailed throughout Italy with a frenzy of enthusiasm. He immediately began the work of political reform in the States of the Church, and one of his first acts was to grant an amnesty which sent thousands, who had passed weary years in prison, back to their families and the pursuits of active life. But he had not reckoned with the deadly under-current of revolutionary spirit, daily growing in strength from the influence of the secret societies, and these very men used their new-found liberty in helping to overthrow every support of order in both Church and State. When they found that, in spite of his patriotism, the new Pope's wisdom knew how to draw and maintain the line of demarcation between reasonable reforms and the reckless demands of reckless men, the shouts of *Hosanna* gave place to the ominous cry of *Crucifige*.

Mazzini was now and had long been the recognized head of a party called "Young Italy," and his aim was to organize the forces of the revolution, and establish the one and indivisible republic in Europe. He declared war upon existing order all over the world, and freely used conspiracy and assassination to effect his purposes. Italy was the chief scene of his labours, and when the Revolution of 1848 drove Louis Philippe from his throne it put fresh power into his hands. Another leader of public opinion, especially in Piedmont, was Gioberti, a Piedmontese priest, who having been exiled from Sardinia

for political intrigues, attributed his disgrace to the Jesuits, and vowed undying hatred against them in revenge. His Utopia was a confederation of Italian powers under the spiritual presidency of the Pope, and with the army of Piedmont for sword and shield. His book, *The Modern Jesuit*, was a libel of the vilest kind, but he was already well known as an advocate of the sacrilegious union of Catholicism and revolutionary liberalism, and whatever he put forth was widely read. Father de Ravignan travelled to Rome in the winter of 1847-48, through Piedmont, Nice, Turin, and Genoa, amidst frantic cries of *Morte ai Gesuiti*, and his letters gave a melancholy picture of the rapid spread of the Revolution. "In Rome," he says, "we are attacked in every possible way. The Pope has clearly declared that he will suffer martyrdom rather than suppress us." But finding with what fearful rapidity the persecution spread, Pius IX., with great regret, advised the Father General to disperse the Jesuits who were in Rome, and the very day this desire was signified, the Gesù was deserted, and remained so for two years.

The hatred of Gioberti for the Society of the Sacred Heart was second only to that which he felt for the Society of Jesus, and this on account of the immense good it effected in Piedmont. Poor schools, guilds, associations of various kinds brought the lower orders in great numbers within its influence, whilst the boarding schools had sent into the world so many women remarkable not only for their goodness, but also for their serious tastes, their cultivated minds, and love of study that, as it was truly said at the time, by a keen observer of men and manners, the notable reform that society in Turin had undergone was largely due to the education given in the Convents of the Sacred Heart. This prosperity was at its height during the years 1843-45, and at that time there were requests on all sides for fresh foundations. Mother Barat did what she could, but the fair promise was blighted before the hopes raised could be realized.

The accusation of being "Jesuitesses," and consequently having to bear the brunt of the animosity of the Revolution,

was the fate of the Society in almost every country. "The King of Prussia will not have us in his States," Mother Barat wrote at the end of 1845. "He has been told that we are Jesuitesses, that we practise mysteries, and that he had better beware of us. . . . At Florence, the same answer is given, 'They are Jesuitesses.'" "Our position is very peculiar," she continued, "we share the proscription of the Jesuits, and yet we may not benefit by the help we might expect from them, as being persecuted on their account. Happily the Sacred Heart is our support. Let us keep closely united to our Lord through the heart of His Blessed Mother, and we shall withstand any thing and every thing."

Gioberti's venom showed itself in calumnious attacks. "This is the storm," Mother Barat wrote to Mother du Rousier, in 1845, "that seems to threaten your flock. It would be wise, I think, to refute these horrible calumnies of Gioberti's by an article in one of the newspapers, for they may do us serious injury in countries where we are not known." She repeated this in another letter, and added: "When one thinks that this Gioberti is actually receiving public veneration in Rome! I have been assured that his bust, crowned with flowers and surrounded with lights, has been placed in the *Corso*, opposite that of Pius IX.! What times we live in!"

The allegations put forward by Gioberti were so devised as to deceive the credulous of all parties. To good Catholics the nuns were accused of condemning the actions of Pius IX., and of even having prayers said for his conversion. The so-called patriots were told that they kept up the Austrian influence in Italy, and even subsidized their Government. To the lower classes they were decried as "aristocrats," "hypocrites," "enemies to progress," or to sum up all in one word as "Jesuitesses." The attacks centred upon Mother du Rousier herself. She was caricatured on the stage and in the streets; an actress went so far one day as to call upon her on some slight pretext, that she might make her representation more lifelike.

In March, 1848, the King of Sardinia, Charles Albert, drew up and issued a Constitution for Piedmont, and in the

same month declared war upon Austria. Revolt against the Austrian yoke had broken out in Lombardy and Venetia, and was successful for the time. Sardinian troops pursued the retreating Austrians across the Ticino, and maintained their advantage until July, when the Austrian veteran, General Radetsky, defeated them signally at Custozza. This victory changed the whole aspect of affairs, and the Austrians recovered for a time their Italian dominions. Meantime, the revolutionary party in Turin, encouraged by the attitude of the King, grew bolder. In March, 1848, the Jesuits were violently expelled from their college in Turin, and next day, Shrove Tuesday, warning was sent to the nuns of the Sacred Heart that similar treatment was in store for them. The parents who had children at school there took alarm, and as some pupils were withdrawn, the panic spread. The Government was powerless, for the King was completely in the hands of the mob. He even went so far as to place the defence of the convent in the hands of its worst enemies, the National Guard, who, anxious to obtain arms, asked for and received the charge of defending it. Their defence was a regular siege, and for a whole week the nuns had to endure the ever-growing insolence of these strange protectors. Mother du Rousier sent word of the position they were in to the Minister of the Interior. "The King can do nothing for you," was the answer she received. "You may believe this, for it is his Minister who informs you of it." She then had recourse to the Archbishop, but he had just received an official request to betake himself into exile to preserve his life.

Mother du Rousier had gradually placed all her nuns in safety; at last she was left alone in the convent, and on March 9th, she too abandoned it. It was a bitter sorrow to her to leave it, and the sting of reproach for not having held out longer, was afterwards added to all her other sufferings, a reproach from which the sequence of events completely exonerated her.

At first she accepted for herself and her daughters the hospitality offered them in Turin by various private families.

An attempt was made to gather the community together at Pignerol, but animosity pursued them there, and a few weeks later a vote of the Piedmontese Chamber decreed their expulsion from all their convents in the Kingdom of Sardinia with the sole exception of Chambéry.

Thus, in two months, the Society lost in Piedmont the result of twenty years of labour.

Mother du Rousier, with a few of the religious from Turin, Saluzzo, Pignerol, and Genoa, arrived in Paris in April. "I shall never forget," writes one of them, "the impression of peace which came over us when we saw our Mother General. Far from showing the deep grief which our presence must have renewed in her heart, she looked at us with so kind a smile that we took comfort under the weight of our misfortunes. Yet her eyes were full of tears. 'I was counting on taking refuge with you in case we were turned out of France,' she said, 'and here are you flying to us for shelter. All that God does is well done; we must submit.'"

Cruel anxiety about the other Italian houses soon followed. The refusal of the Holy Father to countenance the war with Austria roused the fury of the Revolution. His Minister, Rossi, was assassinated by its emissaries, and the extreme peril he ran in Rome forced Pius IX. to take refuge at Gaëta, where the King of Naples gave him generous hospitality. In February, 1849, Rome was declared a Republic with three dictators of whom Mazzini was one. The French army which was to undertake its deliverance, landed at Civita Vecchia in April, and before the month was over laid siege to the city, which capitulated in July. The French troops then entered and held it for the Pope, who returned there early in the following year.

The time of the siege of Rome was one of anguish for Mother Barat on account of the danger to which her three communities were exposed from the Garibaldian hordes and the rabble that formed the forces of the Republic. Indeed if she had been on the spot she would have seen nothing to allay her fears. Perquisitions and threats were the lot of the

Trinità, which was at last subjected to a most rigorous search, on the absurd pretext that it communicated by means of subterranean passages with the besieger's lines. The Villa Lante was sacked and pillaged by Garibaldi, and the nuns were conveyed to the Trinità like malefactors, under an escort of armed men. Santa Rufina received a visit from three delegates, who read a pompous decree announcing to the nuns that the Roman Republic declared them released from their vows, and free to go where they would. The answer was what might have been expected, and the delegates withdrew, crestfallen.

The early summer of 1848, after the arrival of Mother du Rousier in Paris, was spent by Mother Barat in providing for the religious, a hundred in all, who had been expelled from Italy. In one of her visits to Conflans, Mother Barat told the novices that six nuns were to start in a short time for America, and that six more would soon follow. "In this way," she said, "God brings good out of evil. When the light leaves one country it goes to another. If we are banished from France, well, there is plenty of room in the Sacred Heart, and the whole world is ours, America, the Burmese Empire, even China, are open to us, and we shall go further afield to found new colonies. Well then," she added, rising from her chair, "you would go to America rather than be so unhappy as to forfeit your vocation?" Most emphatically did their united voices assure her that such was the case, and "we felt," one of them wrote, "that we had become even doubly her children."

Some letters written at this time give us a glimpse of the suffering Mother Barat so energetically concealed from those with whom she lived. She wrote in May, 1848, to Mother Thérèse Maillucheau:

> How far away those peaceful and happy early days of our religious life seem! I scarcely dare to think of them, so much does their remembrance move me; besides there is regret for having so little known the gift of God, and not having made the most of it. But as the past is no longer in our power, let us entrust it to God's mercy, and try to use the evening of life to enkindle our dying torch. *As God wills, and what He wills* says every thing.

Let us [she wrote again] say with the Psalmist: "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me," and we may add to have been hated without cause, and calumniated because our only desire was to do good to this Italy which has caused us so much suffering. But let us adore God's designs in silence, and submit without reserve to His will.

Væ nobis, quia peccavimus tibi, was the burden of her pen at this time; almost all her letters contain these words. It was also the burden of her thoughts, the chief idea in her mind. She looked out upon life through the supernatural atmosphere of the relations between the creature and the Creator, and therefore of sin and its consequences. "My sorrow," she wrote when she heard of the loss of her houses in Piedmont, "is the hatred it shows of our Divine Lord, and the gain to the enemy of souls. We must at least do all we can to make up for it by redoubling our zeal, fidelity, and love. Let us make ourselves worthy to work for the salvation of souls, and if it may not be in one country, let it be in another. What does it matter where, provided we fulfil our vocation?"

"At last Rome is given back," she wrote when the terrible anxiety of the siege was over. "What gratitude we owe to our Lord, what thanksgiving to the Sacred Heart; yet we must go on praying, for the evil is very deep-seated, and the wound will not heal for many a long year. We need special help from our Lord."

As soon as peace was restored in Paris, Mother Barat had left it in July, 1848, to visit some of the convents in the provinces. She went to Beauvais, Amiens, Tours, Bordeaux, Nantes, Niort, and Poitiers, travelling in secular dress, and with Mother Aymardine de Nicolay as her companion. The journey lasted several months, and in the course of it she paid her first visit to Marmoutier, which had become the property of the Society in the previous year. The question of buying the site and ruins of the once famous monastery had long been mooted, and Mgr Morlot, Archbishop of Tours, wished much that she should do so. Father Varin also urged it upon her.

When he came back in 1839, from a journey he had made in Touraine [she wrote], he told me that one of the things he had asked

of our Lord, through the intercession of St. Martin, was that the site of the celebrated abbey should bear a Convent of the Sacred Heart. This was what put the idea into his mind. He saw the ruins from the river, and was much struck with the universal interest and veneration the sight aroused amongst his fellow-passengers upon the steamer. He made a pilgrimage thither, and prayed in the grotto where St. Martin, the great apostle of this country, had so often been favoured with the visible presence of his Divine Master. The answers he received to his inquiries increased his desire that a spot so full of holy memories should pass into hands that would cherish and revive them. He advised me to buy it, but alas, means were not forthcoming, and I regretted it very much.

The abbey, however, was eventually purchased, and she wrote to the community at Tours, which was to be transferred to Marmoutier: "You are called to the honour of treading where saints have trod before you, but remember you must be saints to live here worthily. You have some months still to prepare; let them be a time of renewal in the practice of silence, charity, obedience, humility, and complete abnegation."

Few sites in France are more full of holy recollections than the level piece of ground near Tours between the Loire and the sandstone cliff, where in the fourth century St. Martin retired with a few chosen disciples to lead a life of prayer and penance. So quickly did his followers gather round him that two thousand of his monks assisted at his funeral rites, and one of the most magnificent Benedictine abbeys of France rose later on the spot where stood the hut in which he used to live. Marmoutier, the Great Monastery, or St. Martin's Monastery, was throughout the Middle Ages by so much the foremost abbey of France that its abbot was called the "Abbot of abbots," and its fame as a seat of learning was so great in the time of Charlemagne and later, that scholars were attracted to it from all parts of the world. Nineteen canonized saints have lived within its walls.

But evil days came. It was desecrated and became the property of the nation during the French Revolution, and when order was partially restored it was sold to a citizen of

the Republic, who showed that he was its master by demolishing in hot haste the grand old pile. The grottoes hollowed out in the face of the cliff as hermitages for St. Martin and his followers, were used as cattle-sheds ; the chapel where, in their stone coffins, the Seven Holy Sleepers had been laid to rest, fifteen hundred years before, was now made to do service as a sheepfold, and the stone altar consecrated by St. Martin was turned to account for the animals' use.

A grand old gateway, at once monastic and warlike, belonging to the thirteenth century, that had served as the entry and defence of the inner enclosure, is the only picturesque relic of the old Marmoutier. The low wall of enclosure is still standing, and two towers of the four that once rose at the four angles of this wall.

In 1868, the tombs of the Seven Sleepers were re-discovered under a layer of soil seven inches deep, and in 1878 the work of restoration of their chapel was begun.

On Mother Barat's first visit to Marmoutier, a room in the old gateway, reached by a spiral staircase of seventy-five steep steps, was prepared for her, and she delighted in it. She wrote to Mother Emilie Giraud : "St. Martin's solitude has decided me to make my retreat here, near the grotto where this great saint prayed so often and so long. Pray that I may not tread this holy ground in vain." "I am holding on against wind and tide," she wrote again ; "but I find calm for the time being, and strength for the future in the hours I spend with our Lord and His faithful servant."

Many deaths amongst her religious, which followed at this time in quick succession, were but the preludes to a loss which Mother Barat felt even more, that of Father Varin. When, in his extreme old age, he visited the novices at Conflans, he seemed in their eyes almost the impersonation of St. John the Evangelist, especially as the burden of all his discourses was charity, a great and strong love for God and for their neighbour. "Your whole life long," he said, "say, 'God is good,' then, at death, you will repeat it, and it will be your song for all eternity." "You know, my children," he said to

them, one day, "I am near the end of my life. I cannot preach now, and am fit for nothing but to keep quiet in my corner. But I wished to come once more, to say one word: *Gaudete.*" On Lætare Sunday in 1849, he exhorted them to rejoice, in spite of the bad times in which they lived. "You will find cause for rejoicing," he said, "in these three words: 'I believe,' 'I hope,' 'I love.' 'I believe in one God, Who is my Father, and Who loves me: *Lætare.*' 'I hope for a grace that will lead me to perfection here below, and a glory that will be my beatitude in Heaven: *Lætare.*' 'I love a God Who is all beauty and all goodness, and I know that I love Him, because, preferring Him to all created things, I have left all for Him: *Lætare* therefore, now and always.'"

Soon after this visit his strength failed, and he was seldom able to leave the house. His last letter to Mother Barat was written on July 20th of that year. Speaking of the union that had so long existed between their souls, he said:

> Forty-eight years ago, our Lord effected this union; by uniting us again, hereafter, in His Sacred Heart, He will make it eternal. But whilst awaiting this happy hour, we must be united with Him upon the Cross. You, dear Mother, who carry your cross so well, obtain for me the grace to bear mine with love. Alas, how far I am still from this! Pray then very much for me. There is a chapel near here, in which our Lord seems every day to tell us that He is glad to be. He will listen favourably, then, when the day after to-morrow, the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, I shall offer the Holy Sacrifice for you, that He may shed abundant graces on His very dear servant.

On January 19th, 1850, the old man paid his last visit to Conflans, and, as he was crossing the threshold, turned and said his last words to the novices: "My children, remember; always courage and confidence!" Early in April, Mother Barat wrote: "We shall soon lose our good Father Varin. There will be a saint the less on earth, and one the more in Heaven." He was very ill, and she wrote to him to say good-bye and to ask his blessing. Her letter was read to him, and as she mentioned some of her daughters by name, he found strength to say earnestly: "They are all in my heart!" She

also asked forgiveness for any pain they might have caused him. "No, there is nothing," he said; "I have forgotten every thing. Oh, may God bless them, may He bless them always!" The end was as peaceful as his life had been holy. Mother Barat made known to the Society, in a circular letter, the loss it had sustained. "There is every ground to hope," she said, "that from the height of Heaven that good Father will watch over this little Society, which, after God, owes its existence to him. Pray also for her whose only desire is to help in making you worthy spouses of the Sacred Heart."

CHAPTER XL

THE FIRST JUBILEE. 1850.

Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made.
Our times are in His Hand
Who saith, a whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; see all, trust God nor be afraid.

BROWNING.

OLD age had come to Mother Barat, and yet she was still holding in her hands all the threads of the complicated tissue that now composed the Society, founded fifty years before. A generation had grown up and passed away, and another generation was running its appointed course, and she was still the centre whence radiated its activity; her thought, her prudence, her sanctity still guided and vivified it all.

As the year 1850 was drawing to its close, Mother Barat left France for Rome. Pius IX. had returned there after his exile at Gaëta, and she was most anxious to pay her homage to him, now that circumstances allowed of her doing so. She went, by sea, from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia, accompanied by Mothers Prevost and Cahier.

On November 15th, she was at the Villa Lante, which she found bearing sad traces of the havoc made by Garibaldi, and there, on November 20th, she prepared for the celebration of the anniversary which fell on the following day by a Conference so stamped with humility and love, that those who heard her could not but feel in what spirit she wished the day to be kept.

"Fifty years ago," she said, "our Lord laid the foundations of our little Society. Other Institutes have had a founder or

a foundress, and that is just the difference between us and them. We have neither the one nor the other. Our only Founder is the Sacred Heart. No doubt, our Lord made use of an instrument, but one so poor and small, really nothing, a mere nothing! He chose it because of its nothingness, He wished the work to be all His. To Him alone, then, be the glory."

Then, step by step, she traced the progress of the Society, showing how it had sprung from the Sacred Heart, and how our Lord had guided, strengthened, protected, and upheld it at every stage of its career. After speaking of the debt of gratitude incurred by each of its members for so many favours, she continued: "It is incumbent upon every Religious Order to study the mind of its founder, to assimilate itself thereto. Its perfection is in proportion to the measure of likeness the disciples attain to their master. We have to study the Sacred Heart of Jesus, His teaching, and the example of His virtues. 'Learn of Me,' He says, 'that I am meek and humble of Heart.' We must strive after the two-fold end of our Society, our own salvation, and that of others, by loving Him ourselves and inducing others to love Him, who has loved us so much, and to whom alone be glory, praise, blessing, thanksgiving for ever."

She spoke these words, as if she wished to annihilate herself altogether; she had but one fear, that any one should attribute to her any share in the good work, to the accomplishment of which she looked on herself as having been only an obstacle.

The next day was a joyful one for all but her. In the morning, Father Roothaan, the General of the Jesuits, preached in her presence a discourse in which he frequently, though with great tact and delicacy, alluded to her long labours. After Mass he told her that no other example was to be met with in the history of the Church, of a Religious Order that had so long enjoyed the presence of its founder or foundress. "That says very little for me," was her ready answer. "It only shows that none of them took such care of themselves as I have done." The preacher at the service in the afternoon was less guarded than Father Roothaan had

been, and Mother Barat when she had listened for a short time quietly left the chapel. Afterwards she inquired the preacher's name of Mother de Limminghe, and begged that he might never be asked to preach there again.

"As far as I am concerned," she wrote to Mother Desmarquest, "I should have wished that this anniversary might have been made nothing of; but we cannot thank God too much for the graces, that, in spite of my poverty and wretchedness, He is always bestowing on the Society. Go on then praying and getting prayers that my later years, if God grants me more, may be better than the past, and that they may be years of reparation."

Mother Barat was too ill throughout the winter months to make the visit to the Vatican, which was the principal object of her journey; but in February she had regained strength enough for the audience. Pius IX. had already given many proofs of fatherly interest in the Society, and his reception of Mother Barat was most kind. In many of her letters she alluded to the happiness caused by the interview, and all the veneration which the sight of what she called "the meek majesty of the Holy Father" aroused in her. "And yet," she added in one of these letters, "how harrowing is the recollection of all this great soul has suffered! I thought also of what he has still to undergo, for unhappily, there is no change in public opinion. Well for us there is a God, who watches over His own! Our trust must be in His protection."

The great kindness shown to Mother Barat by Pope Pius IX. encouraged her to present him a triple petition on subjects which she had much at heart. Its objects were: (1) To associate with the Superior General, Provincial Superiors, who, having a certain number of houses entrusted to their care, should bear, along with her and under her direction, part of the burden of government. (2) To abolish the old form of Council composed of twelve members and renewing itself; substituting for it the convocation of the Assistants General, the Provincial Superiors, and a Professed from each province. (3) To allow the Superior General the secret nomi-

nation of a Vicar General destined to take the reins of government from the death of the Superior General until the election of her successor.

There was no divergence of opinion in the Society with regard to the wisdom and urgency of these finishing touches to the Constitutions. The petition was presented therefore unanimously, and with full confidence; but there was an irregularity in the manner of presenting it; and after two months' delay a negative answer was returned.

It was a great blow to Mother Barat, one of the most painful and unexpected refusals she had ever known. It was impossible for her any longer to govern the Society without the help of Provincials, and at her death the whole burden would devolve upon the first Assistant General, Mother de Charbonnel, who was more aged than she herself, and moreover blind. Nothing was arranged as to the succession. The Council, whose right it was to regulate it, was nearly extinct, and its mode of renewal was defective and irregular. The prospect was deplorable, and after the negative answer to the petition, where was the remedy to be found?

Mother Barat did not lose heart, though her distress was very great, and she had recourse to *Mater Admirabilis*. It was our Lady's month, and Mother Barat laid her petition on the altar that stood before the picture. She had not long to wait for the answer. On May the 6th, the Pope, hearing of her great sorrow at the refusal, sent one of his prelates, Mgr Lucciardi, to learn from her own mouth what she wished for her Society, and, on the report of this interview, graciously withdrew the Decree that embodied the negative answer. He moreover commissioned three Cardinals to look further into the matter. On May the 23rd, 1851, a fresh Decree was issued granting every thing. The only change made was that the word "Vicariate" was preferred to "Province" for the divisions of the Society, and the Superiors in charge of the Vicariates were to be called "Mothers Vicar."

After a final audience with the Holy Father to express her heartfelt gratitude, Mother Barat left Rome on June 14th.

She was never to see it again. "I wish I could describe," she wrote in a letter addressed to the whole Society, "the warmth and cordiality with which the Holy Father gave us his blessing; the interest, the kindness with which he inquired about the works, with which we are entrusted, and the earnestness with which he expressed his desire to see us fully correspond with our vocation. I hope that this blessing will bear fruit, and that we shall strive to alleviate in some measure his heavy burden of sorrow."

It was with these heartstirring exhortations ringing in her ears that, on her way through Lyons in August, 1851, she spoke to the Children of Mary who had assembled at the Rue Boissac to see her. "It is for you," she said, "to accomplish what is impossible for us, shut up as we are in our convents. We have brought you together to do our work in the world outside, that, by your example, we may preach there and gain hearts to the love of Jesus and Mary."

It was urgent to convoke a General Congregation, and as nothing now stood in the way, it was appointed to assemble at Lyons in November. The year 1851 was a disturbed one in Paris, and Lyons was chosen as more secure. La Ferrandière, where the assembly was to be held, though so near Lyons was in the diocese of Grenoble, and the Bishop was Mgr Philibert de Bruillard, who during the latter years of the eighteenth century, as a young priest in Paris, had been Sophie Barat's director. His kindly interest had followed her through life, and when he heard of the proposed meeting at La Ferrandière, he wrote to Mother Prevost, the Superior, saying how happy he was to have her in his diocese, and how much he wished he could have opened the sessions of the Congregation, by saying the Mass of the Holy Ghost.

As the time drew near, Mother Barat was so ill, that an adjournment seemed inevitable. However, as she could not walk, she had herself carried from her bed to the train, and less than three days later, November 13th, 1851, the General Congregation was opened.

The special object proposed on this occasion was the

uniform observance of the Rules, according to the wishes of the Pope, who at the close of the recent Decree signified his will that, on all other points but the three specified "the Constitutions approved by Leo XII. of holy memory, be entirely adhered to." "These Rules," Mother Barat said beforehand, "are for us the expression of the will of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and as long as we keep in its integrity this rampart of every religious Institution, the enemy of all good will be powerless against us."

The Congregation promulgated the modifications in the government of the Society approved by the Pope, and organized the division of the sixty-five houses of the Society into ten Vicariates; eight of which were in Europe, and two in America. It also adopted a new Plan of Studies drawn up chiefly by Mother d'Avenas. The Assistants General elected at its close were Mothers de Charbonnel, Desmarquest, Coppens, and Prevost.

It was towards the end of January, 1852, that Mother Barat returned to Paris. She at once explained to Mgr Sibour, the new Archbishop, the motives that had led her to hold the Congregation at Lyons. The act had given him some umbrage, but Mother Barat's explanations, and above all her deep humility, softened and satisfied him. He even undertook to obtain the sanction of the Government for the slight changes involved in the recent Decree, and in August, 1853, she received the Imperial approval, for by that time the Prince President had become Emperor.

When the Mothers who had come from America for the Congregation, returned home in February, 1852, Mother Barat sent by them her last letter to Mother Duchesne, who had climbed now nearly to the summit of the rugged heights of her mountain of perfection.

Our Mothers start to-morrow, dear Mother, for their beloved mission. I have no doubt that Mother Cutts will make all haste on her return to pay you a little visit, to talk over with you the Society and your old Mothers, who all have so loving a remembrance of you; above all she will tell you how full of consolation our meeting has been,

full too, I hope, of fruit for the Society. I trust that this will be, dear Philippine, a great comfort to you in your old age. But, as in this world the thorn always grows close to the loveliest flowers, so the Cross is never far from our works. We have lost many on whom we relied; the revolutions prevent many from joining us, and thus, though we are asked for on every side, we are obliged to refuse foundations over and over again. The real cause is no doubt that we are not up to the standard of perfection we should reach in our vocation, and so our Lord keeps back or lessens His gifts and favours.

If we had souls as full of zeal and detachment as those who first went to America, we should not require so many workers, and foundations would be easily made. Pray, therefore, kind and good Mother, fervently and earnestly, that our Blessed Lord may consider the needs of the souls that ask for us, and that He will deign to send us those who are according to His own Heart. He will hear you, I am sure, my daughter of long ago, who have so well understood the value of souls and who shrank from no danger when our Lord called you to their help. Pray also for your Mother, whose needs increase with years and responsibilities. I have in vain begged to be relieved of the burden I have borne for half a century. The Mothers turned a deaf ear to my prayers. Still I do not give up hope that our Lord will grant me grace to die without this dreadful responsibility upon my soul, Help me, dear Mother and child, to obtain this favour.

We have seen what Mother Duchesne's life was at St. Charles after her return from the Indian settlement. Whilst she was there, she habitually spent four hours in the morning and four in the afternoon motionless before the tabernacle, so that the Indians usually spoke of her as *the woman of prayer;* and their respect for her took the form of veneration, that made them bring her their first-fruits and other offerings as they had done in old days to their *Manitou.* It was this life which she continued at St. Charles, but it was made still more meritorious by great increase of suffering. In 1846, she had the sorrow to know that the house she had founded at Fleurissant, so dear to her from its associations with the past, was suppressed. Her early companions also, one by one, had left this earth for their eternal home. In 1844, she lost Sister Catherine Lamarre, who had come with her from Paris in 1817. All this detached her more and more from earth, but nothing went so near the

"division of the soul and the spirit" as a mysterious silence that fell upon her, and enclosed her, as it were, in a dark veil of mist, by cutting her off from the source of the purest and keenest earthly joy her aged heart could know. From the year 1845, she did not receive the answers to her letters that Mother Barat sent, and gradually discontinued her letters. "I was persuaded," she wrote afterwards, "that I had lost my place in your heart, and in spite of the conviction that it was my own fault, my sorrow was crushing." For two years this trial lasted. God allowed it for her sanctification. Yet no change had taken place in Mother Barat. She suffered, as Mother Duchesne did, from the cessation of the correspondence, and grew more and more uneasy. When, in 1847, she sent to America Mother Duchesne's niece, Mother Amélie Jouve—a second Aloysia for she had taken her sister's name—she bade her go first to St. Charles, though it was several hundred miles out of her way, that she might see her aunt. "I may say with Antony," Mother Jouve wrote after this visit, "that I have seen Paul in the desert. Yes, I have seen a great saint, and one drawing near the end of her earthly pilgrimage. I found her very weak, and her voice so feeble that it is hard to hear what she says. She received me like an angel come down from Heaven. The Cross has ever been her portion, and for some time past she has suffered intensely, believing that she had incurred our Mother General's displeasure. It was an ecstatic happiness that lit up her countenance when she read our Very Reverend Mother's letter, and heard that she had sent me to St. Charles on purpose to see her. We had long talks over the past, the names of our Mothers and Sisters in France recurred over and over again, and the recollections of the early days of the Society."

Henceforward the correspondence between Mother Barat and Mother Duchesne was renewed, and the latter responded to all marks of affection with the most touching and humble gratitude.

Her favourite place was still, as always, before the tabernacle. "God has given me here [St. Charles]," she wrote

to Mother Barat "a room which adjoins the chapel. I pass from one to the other. My happiness is to pray for the missions, for the Society, and for you, my beloved and revered Mother, who hold for me the place of God." She sometimes answered three Masses in succession, without rest. On days when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, it was difficult to tear her away from the chapel, even for her meals; she seemed to live only in the thought that our Lord was there. "Can we complain of any thing," she said, "when we have our Lord in the tabernacle?" "My old age passes sadly," she wrote to Mother Barat in January, 1850. "I am losing my sight; but God is always good. I have the comfort of working in silence near the tabernacle. Every day I hear two or three Masses. . . . I do not know whether you will be able to read what I have written. I am so old, but I am still able to move about, by the grace of God, who admits me almost daily to His Holy Table." She was almost transfigured by Holy Communion. A wonderful light was seen to shine from her countenance after she had received It, as if a flame were reflected upon her face. The children used to wait to see her come out of the chapel after her thanksgiving, and as they watched her would whisper: "Mother Duchesne is praying." Very likely she was praying for them, and she often joined penance to prayer; in her old age it was the last resource for her zeal. She once at this time fasted for a week to obtain the conversion of one amongst them. When she was dying, tears of joy and gratitude rolled down her furrowed cheeks, on hearing that this child of her prayers, who had not only been converted but won to religious life, was about to make her Profession.

Throughout the early months of 1852, her weakness had been very great, and she herself thought that her mind was failing; but she was spared this trial, and the great soul appears in her words and actions to the last. In August, she asked for and received the last sacraments, and the following day she wrote letters to Mother Barat, to her own sister, Madame Jouve, and to her Indian mission. "Reverend and dear Mother," the first of these letters ran, "this is to all

appearance the last letter I shall be able to write to you. Yesterday I received the last sacraments. But perhaps God may still intend to make me wait before I have the blessing of seeing Him. The wanderings of mind I suffered from, were only the result of high fever, which did not prevent me from going about. I do not know now when the end will be. I come once more to kneel in spirit at your feet, and assure you of my deep respect."

Just before the end, another great joy was reserved to be the last earthly consolation of this apostolic soul. Soon after her first coming to the United States, she wrote that if God left her long enough on earth, she hoped to be able to set foot in South America, either at Lima under the patronage of St. Rose, or at Cartagena under that of St. Peter Claver. This was denied her, but on the eve of her death, she saw the one to whom this great mission was entrusted. Mother Cutts, the Vicar of Louisiana, came to St. Charles in November, bringing with her Mother du Rousier, whom Mother Barat had sent to the United States to visit the convents there, and who, in the following year, was destined to cross the Isthmus of Panama, taking the first colony of nuns of the Sacred Heart to Chili. A parallel might well be drawn between the love, suffering and labour of the lives of Mother du Rousier and of Mother Duchesne, for both were cast in heroic mould. It is useless to speculate on what is God's secret, and both are now with Him, to whom each fibre of their being was consecrated to their last breath. Mother Duchesne received Mother du Rousier with intense veneration, as the representative of Mother Barat. She asked for her blessing, and when she had received it, consented in her turn to give the blessing which Mother du Rousier asked of her. A few hours later she was with God, having kept her consciousness to the last. She was in the eighty-fourth year of her age, and the thirty-fourth of her work in America.

In July, 1852, Mother Barat was at Marmoutier, where by this time Mother Thérèse Maillucheau was living. She could no longer work as she had done, and the time for rest had

come. "Prayer is your employment now," Mother Barat wrote to her, "and souls are saved more by this means than by work. You must be Moses praying on the mountain, whilst your Mothef is fighting on the plain." "No longer to be Superior, and to have plenty of time for prayer," she wrote again, "is Heaven on earth ; shall I never know this happiness ? Do you remember how you loved it in your early days, when you used to say how happy those were who did all whilst doing nothing, who said all whilst keeping silence ? This happiness is once more your lot, whilst for your mother it is still : *Super flumina Babylonis.* Indeed it is a very Babylon, this city in which we live."

The exceptional needs of the neighbourhood of Marmoutier led to the establishment there of a poor school for little boys, and Mother Barat always took the greatest interest in this work. "The little fellows are one of my delights at Marmoutier," she wrote. "Father Barrelle, who spent three days there, is as pleased with them as I am. Their gratitude is touching ; let us hope they will learn to be grateful above all to the Sacred Heart of our Lord."

In September, Mother Barat was at Kienzheim, which she had not seen for seven years. "I was sure," she said on her arrival, "that I should find amongst you souls wholly given up to God, souls that the cost of a sacrifice would never hold back, and I assure you that the thought gave me a thrill of joy."

She often, during her stay, spoke on this subject. One day she said : "Where shall I find a soul that fights as valiantly for God as His enemies are pertinacious in their attacks ? If I thought there was such a one to be found at the antipodes, I would go in search of her. Can we not do for our Heavenly Spouse what a woman will do for her husband ?" And she cited the example of the wife of an Italian brigand, who saved his life at the expense of her own. "As the spouse of Jesus Christ," Mother Barat added, "I envied that death."

"See," she said again, "how our Lord loves humility. We ourselves prove it. As He cannot, now that He is in glory, practise this virtue in His own person, He wills at least in

some sort to practise it on earth, by choosing such poor creatures as we are for the spouses of His Sacred Heart."

"To begin with myself," she said another time, "how cold and hard are our hearts when we meditate on the Passion. A spiritual writer called this indifference a diabolical miracle, and indeed he was right." "Within and without," she exclaimed, "how cramped and narrow we are; and yet the horizon should alone bound our vision. Where can we acquire this breadth of view but in the Sacred Heart of our Lord? He will plunge our nothingness into His immensity, and will transform it into Himself, as iron in a furnace becomes like fire. Then our power would be unlimited, and even impossible things would become possible. How far we are from this!"

The following year she was at La Ferrandière, but not so early as she wished, and she wrote to the Superior, Mother Elisa de Bouchaud: "I am like a ship beset by contrary winds, that can make no headway nor yet go back. I let myself be thus tossed about by the will of God. When He pleases to give me free course, I shall come to you." It was a time of trial for La Ferrandière, which in the previous year had lost its Superior, Mother Prevost. Her new duties as Assistant General kept her henceforward in Paris. "I was delighted with all," Mother Barat wrote to her. "You have put every thing here on so excellent a footing. Good spirit religious virtues are in full vigour. Mother de Bouchaud gives life and energy to it all."

With very few exceptions Mother Barat's journeys were now over. The remaining years of her life were spent in Paris, and her work was done chiefly there.

CHAPTER XLI

LAST JOURNEYS. 1850–1865.

> He dares much, and to that dauntless temper of his mind
> He has a wisdom that still guides his valour
> To act in safety.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

THAT we may realize what Mother Barat's occupations were during the last years of her life, and what were the ever-increasing claims upon her thought and heart, it will be well to glance at the increase of the Society between 1850 and 1865, before we follow her into the more hidden paths of her action upon individual souls.

When Mother Barat was in Rome in 1851, Mgr Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, begged her to make a foundation in his episcopal city, and it was not a request she could refuse. She entrusted the work to Mother d'Avenas, who established the Society there, in a building that had served as a Carthusian monastery until the Revolution.

You have the qualities necessary for a Mistress General [Mother Barat wrote to her], as regards discipline, the care of the children, and their education. But to win their hearts and the confidence of the parents, we must be busied about them from morning till night, and quite forgetful of self. We must enter into every thing that concerns their bodies and their souls; listen to them with interest, console, and encourage them. Lastly, we must sacrifice every thing except our own souls, and to be useful to them we must be gentle, patient, indulgent, true *Mothers*, but wiser mothers than those whose mistaken kindness we often have to make up for. Examine yourself; is it thus you have fulfilled your charge?

About the same time, a convent was founded in an old Benedictine abbey at Layrac, near Agen, a house which Mother Barat was never to see, but where great good was to be done. In 1853, a foundation was made at Moulins, and, in the following year, one also at Saint-Brieuc, and another at Calais. In 1848, Mother Gertrude de Brou had been entrusted with the task of establishing a convent near Aix-la-Chapelle, at Blumenthal, on the frontier of the Rhenish provinces, but on Dutch soil. Several of the nuns, expelled from Italy, formed part of the community, and work was not wanting to them. Mother de Brou had begun her religious life at Dooresele, but entered the Society of the Sacred Heart at Montet, where she was afterwards sub-Mistress of Novices.

If we fight against the life of nature [Mother Barat wrote to her in 1839] we enable our Lord to gain the mastery over our hearts. How happy we are, then, to possess Him. *Dulcis hospes animæ.* Learn this lesson, dear Gertrude, and become interior at any cost.

How watchful a Superior ought to be [she wrote again], how she must exhort and correct! She must be always like the vigilant watch-dog, that sleeps with its eyes open. Yet this watchfulness must be motherly and gentle, full of calm and charity. Let all your daughters know that you love them, and that you require only what is for their good. Discourage merely human affection for yourself; let all their love be for our Lord, and that, if possible, by seeing Him in you. This heavenly transformation will take place, if, meek and humble of heart, you see and seek only the interests of God's glory.

Mother de Brou had clearly taken these instructions to heart, when she wrote amongst her notes: "Our Lord is less our Superior than He is our Father, Mother, Friend. To command as He does, to direct as He does, to correct as He does, and even, if necessary, to threaten and punish as He does,—this is my duty and shall be my endeavour." In 1851, Mother Barat gave her directions as to a foundation near Münster, in Westphalia. "Go to Warendorf as soon as possible," she wrote in December; "see all there is to be seen there, and decide upon the works to be undertaken. If we can manage with things as they are, for a little while, we ought,

I think, not to refuse our Lord this act of abnegation and poverty." There was already an orphanage at Warendorf, but carried on in extreme penury. It soon increased when it was made over to the Society of the Sacred Heart, and a boarding school was added before long. "Warendorf is getting on well," Mother Barat said to the novices at Kienzheim. "I am glad it was in the midst of poverty" ["and vermin," she added *sotto voce*] "that we entered upon our work in Germany. The little orphans, boys and girls, came to school, with only rags to cover them, and terribly neglected. Our Sisters civilized them, washed them, taught them their catechism, and transformed them. I rejoice to think that our foundations in Ireland, America, and everywhere else, begin alike in destitution, and, in the end, attain like satisfactory results."

In the spring of 1852, an attempt was made to found a convent at St. Gall, in Switzerland. "It is an immense consolation to me," Mother Barat wrote, "to install a little colony of the Sacred Heart in a place where they are surrounded by heretics, and where this Divine furnace of love is unknown." But Switzerland was not in a state to tolerate religious teachers. The nuns began as seculars, but when, relying on their success in this capacity, they ventured to apply for authorization from the Government, the radicals turned upon them, with insult and outrage, and they were obliged to return to Kienzheim, whence they had come.

In 1853, the Society seemed likely to come into possession of a magnificent abbey on the island of Meinau, in the Grand Duchy of Baden. But Mother Barat shrank from such a "fairy palace," as this was described to be, and was not sorry when the project fell to the ground.

It would have been too grand a beginning [she wrote]; we ought to be more modest, at least, I think I have understood so. No doubt, Providence will call us elsewhere. We must be on the look-out, for in Germany the fields are white for the harvest. Meanwhile, let us implore the Holy Spirit to inspire us with what we ought to do and undertake for the glory of the Sacred Heart. Then we will act according to His inspirations. Let us accustom ourselves to walk in

these Divine pathways, following the lead of grace, not of nature. There is a great art in not going too fast, if we wish to act by the Spirit of God alone.

The "fairy palace" never belonged to the Society, but in 1853, an old feudal castle near Bregenz was bought for a convent. The chaplain at Kienzheim wrote to Mother Barat: "Let us bless God that our first scheme fell through. The situation of Riedenbourg is better than that of the island of Meinau. It is Austria instead of Baden; it is Bregenz, which after Naples and Constantinople is said to be the finest site in Europe; lastly, it is the Tyrol, the most Catholic country in Europe. I congratulate you on this acquisition, and thank God for it with you."

"When I dream a lovely dream, it is that I am off for Riedenburg," Mother Barat said, and a little later this dream was realized.

In 1853, a foundation was asked for in Milan, and it was one to which Mother Barat attached great importance, because she hoped that this convent might become a new centre, whence the losses of 1848, in Sardinia, might be repaired. In January, 1853, she wrote to Mother de Limminghe, who at the word of obedience had left Rome for Padua, where she governed for a time as Vicar.

You will understand how glad I was at the news you gave me about Milan. We have been wishing for this for a long time, and you were to undertake it. But, my dearest child, the joy is not without its thorn, and I do not see how we are to get rid of the thorn. I really do not know where to look for those who are absolutely necessary for a foundation of this kind. We must pray hard that our Lord may come to our help, and inspire true vocations for our Society. How rare they are becoming! We lose them by the calumnies circulated everywhere about the Society. The devil seems to fear us, for there are no difficulties of this kind he does not raise. The remedy to so many evils, dear Mother, is to sink ever lower into our nothingness,—to practise the deepest humility in season and out of season,—to renew ourselves in the practice of poverty,—and, above all, to rest with a boundless confidence in Him who can do every thing, and who works miracles by means of humble souls that really give themselves

up to His guidance. Our faults, if we are sorry for them, are no hindrance to His mercies, believe it firmly. Go forward then, dear Mother and child, and our Lord be with you.

In December, Mother de Limminghe, with seven religious from Padua, began the work, bravely struggling against many obstacles.

At this time the Society began to spread in Ireland. A foundation was made in 1851 at Armagh, where for three centuries no religious had been seen. Armagh was the episcopal city of St. Patrick, but desolation had come upon it, and it had long been the centre of Orangeism in the north of Ireland, and the residence of the Protestant Primate. Out of a population of 13,000 souls there were, in 1850, only from 5,000 to 6,000 Catholics.

When Archbishop, afterwards Cardinal, Cullen was named Primate of all Ireland, and found himself face to face with the difficulties of his position at Armagh, his thoughts went back to Mother Barat, whom he had met in Rome. He knew the depths of her charity and her intense love for Ireland, and wrote to her to beg her to come to his aid. She could not turn a deaf ear to such an appeal, and in 1851 a poor school was founded there. "Now we can die in peace," said the poor mothers at Armagh, "for our children will be better off than we have been, as the servants of God have come amongst us!" There were soon three hundred children in the school, and on Sundays many poor women came to receive instruction. Their faith led them to bring to the convent sick children to be cured and "according to their faith" it was often "done to them."

Dr. Dixon, who in 1852 succeeded Cardinal Cullen at Armagh, was a devoted friend and father to the nuns. He had seen Mother Barat in Paris, before he came to Armagh. "I have a special love for her Institute," he wrote, "because since its foundation it has shared in the persecutions of the illustrious Society of Jesus, to which it bears a great resemblance in its laws and government. He stood by the nuns in the numerous difficulties that beset their path, and, in 1857, had the happiness of seeing them established in a convent built

for them upon a hill, Mount St. Catherine's, near his own cathedral church. He had even thought it not beneath his dignity to beg from door to door to supply them with the money necessary for the first expenses of the undertaking. He lies now at rest in the convent cemetery beneath the shadow of the Cross, and his memory is held in grateful veneration.

When Cardinal Cullen was translated to the archiepiscopal see of Dublin, he again applied to Mother Barat for a colony of her daughters, and, in 1854, a foundation was made at Glasnevin, transferred a few years later to the beautiful property known as Mount Anville, at Dundrum. It was not till some years later that a convent was established in Dublin.

In 1850, the convent of the Sacred Heart in England was transferred from Berrymead to Roehampton. Mother Charlotte Goold, who had done and suffered so much for the foundation in England, went to her reward in 1849. Mother Barat wrote: "We might say of her what is said of the valiant woman: 'She shall laugh in the latter day.' I do not know how our good Master acts with us. We are worth nothing, and yet all die like saints."

As her long illness made her unable to attend to the business of the house, she had, in 1848, been succeeded as Superior by Mother de Wall, who had come to England with the injunction to seek as soon as possible a fresh site for the convent, where there should be more room for development. From the time of her arrival, Mother de Wall had never lost sight of this object, but all her efforts had proved fruitless. During the month of May, 1849, this intention had been the special object of all the prayers and exercises of the community and children. On the 31st of that month there was a solemn consecration of the house to our Blessed Lady; the keys were put into the hands of her statue, and she was given the title of First Superior. At nine o'clock on the evening of that day a man on horseback came to the door of the convent, and left a letter for the Superior. This letter contained a description of a property for sale in the neighbourhood of London, a large house surrounded by gardens, and near a station. To Mother Goold, then very

near her death, it must have seemed something like a glimpse of a Promised Land, and to the rest like the reward and fruit of her final sacrifice.

A description of this house, Elm Grove, Roehampton, was sent to Paris, with all the particulars which Mother de Wall could collect, and at the end of July she received the answer that such a purchase was out of the question, the price being far beyond the resources of the Society. However, the community at Berrymead persevered in prayer. The novena of the Assumption was made for this intention with special solemnity, and about three weeks after the first letter Mother Barat wrote again to say she had re-read the description of the house, that its position and size were exactly what we required, but that the price was exorbitant. Efforts must be made to obtain a reduction and to get possession of the property. Negotiations were then begun, and prayers redoubled, but things went slowly, and it was not until the following March that Mother d'Avenas came over to see Roehampton and decide upon the purchase. On Saturday, July 27th, 1850, the contract was signed, but August the 24th, eve of the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, was the day chosen for taking possession, and for dedicating the little chapel to the worship of the Sacred Heart. The next day was the feast, kept as solemnly as possible, with High Mass sung by the Rev. Father Armellini, S.J., who was at that time exiled from Rome. In the afternoon was Benediction and consecration to the Sacred Heart. The day finished by a "Festa" in honour of our Blessed Lady. On September 2nd, the children returned, and the work at Roehampton was begun.

In August, 1853, Mother du Rousier was able to carry out her long-cherished desire of establishing the Society of the Sacred Heart in South America. Earlier in the year, Mother Barat had written to her:

I thank God that you have been able to take some rest for body and soul, at Grand Coteau. You saw before you crosses and suffering; it was then the Garden of Olives. But Almighty God sent you, as He sent His Son, an angel to comfort you, and like our Lord you made

your sacrifice to die to every thing for the sake of the souls whom it will be given you to save. What numbers of such are reserved for you in that distant land! You said then, with St. Francis Xavier: *Amplius Domine!* You may believe, dear Anna, that your election has God's blessing upon it.

There was much in this letter that proved prophetic. The hardships and dangers of the journey read rather like romance than sober truth, and it required indomitable courage to go through such perils. Mother du Rousier reached Santiago on September 14th, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and before long had established a Training College for school mistresses, a boarding school, poor schools, and many sodalities. The souls were indeed innumerable that came under her influence, and the good done was immense. The labour, especially at first, before fresh colonies could arrive, was crushing, but nothing daunted her.

Another foundation in Chili, at Talca, was made during Mother Barat's lifetime, and after her death the Society spread to Peru and the Argentine Republic. To few has it been given, as to Mother du Rousier, to see the total collapse of great undertakings, which had occupied the first half of life, followed by the rise and development of another career, as it were, even more fruitful and important than the first.

These were years also of great increase for the Society in North America. "I have never known success myself," Mother Duchesne once said, "but God has given me the grace to rejoice in that of others." Greatly must she have rejoiced from Heaven to see how every thing grew and multiplied in the hands of Mother Aloysia Hardey. America was always in Mother Barat's thoughts and heart. "How I wish I could embark and spend some months with you," she had written in 1837. "I should die happy afterwards. I used to hope for it sometimes, when I was young, but now it is scarcely likely. At least my heart will be often with you, and above all it will pray for you." About the same time she wrote to America:

A thought has struck me, and often recurs to my mind. If you have two novices giving promise of being capable of being formed for

government, and whom—if you could find a sure and safe escort for them—you could send over here, it could be advantageous to send them to Paris or Rome for their novitiate. We would faithfully return them to you. The links which already unite us so closely together would be strengthened, and thus our spirit, which must be the same everywhere, even if we spread over the whole world, would be perpetuated.

As to education in America, she wrote in 1845 :

Aim above all at what is solid and essential. What value are the arts and sciences, compared to the virtues that we ought to instil into our children ? Mere sand and dust that flies before the wind ! Setting aside the greatest interest of all, the salvation of the soul, even superficial people will always prefer a quiet, hard-working, duty-loving wife, to a prodigy who cares only for vanity and pleasure.

In the fulness of her heart, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Hardey : " Our Lord deigns to bless the Society, and the foundations bid fair to prosper, thanks to His goodness who wills to use even poor and weak instruments to procure the glory of His Divine Heart." Well might one, who looked on at all this marvellous growth in the Old World and in the New, say, speaking of Mother Barat to some of her daughters during her life-time : " That your Order should spread so much, and in so short a time, shows that your foundress is very humble. This is the only explanation of it I can find."

But trial followed hard upon prosperity. In 1854, Mother Cutts died of cancer after terrible suffering, borne with heroic fortitude. She was succeeded by Mother Jouve. In 1851, a house had been founded at Baton Rouge, the chief town at that time of Louisiana, and here, in the autumn of 1855, there was a large gathering for the annual retreat, when yellow fever broke out. The first victim was Mother Pratz, the Superior of the house at Grand-Coteau. On hearing of the illness, and the first deaths, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Jouve to express her deep sympathy, saying how she wept and prayed with her. She continued :

I understand so well the state of your soul, and yet you must believe that you would be wrong to allow your fears to get the better

of you. Cast them away; they grieve the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who has loved you so much, and who gives you the proof of His love by sending you such heavy trials. Do not shrink from the Cross; greet it as St. Andrew did. Our Blessed Lord is stretched upon it, and by taking it up lovingly you will find Him there. And indeed what is this compared to eternity? Even if our life were one long martyrdom, it would soon be over. But our rest, the absence of all evil, Heaven — these will last for ever!

Worse news followed, and in the course of a month fifteen persons at Baton Rouge and St. Michel succumbed to the disease. Mother Barat was almost stunned with the blow. She compared her feelings with those of Job's friends, who remained speechless with sorrow for seven days. She first knew of these misfortunes only through the newspapers, but when Mother Jouve's letters reached her they seemed to rouse her. She gave directions as to the future; and proposed the measure, carried out a little later, of suppressing the house at Baton Rouge for the sake of that at St. Michel, where more good was being done.

Your sorrowful details [she added] have yet their consoling side. Our Lord was close beside these death-beds, and I firmly hope that He received the souls of all these dear ones into His Heart. These last years have been very laborious, and full of abnegation for all. You are right. They are victims, not for themselves, but perhaps for others. Those who are spared, and you, first of all, must profit by this trial, to become what our Lord wants you to be, true victims, by making yourself all things to all, embracing the Cross whatever it be, with more love and generosity, redoubling your zeal for souls. You see a wide field is opened before you. Do not be frightened at it. The Heart of our Lord will be with you if you abandon all to Him.

All set to work bravely to carry on the labours undertaken at St. Michel, in spite of their diminished numbers, and the following year Mother Barat wrote to one there:

I feared that after such crushing losses, I should never have any more consolation from St. Michel, but our Lord spared my weakness, and my courage has risen on hearing the details you give me. The ruins of Jerusalem are built up. Every one is working even beyond her strength, and we have the consolation of seeing the prodigies that

souls consecrated to the Sacred Heart can accomplish, when His glory is concerned. I rejoice in the devotedness of one and all. . . . Now my hope grows and strengthens. I shall almost venture to say with the Prophet Aggeus: "The new glories of this house shall outshine the old." It is because the Cross purifies, adorns, and perfects our works. All this has taken place at St. Michel; more than ever then let us love the Cross!

In March, 1856, Mother Barat wrote to Mother Jouve:

I could never tell you what I felt on reading your letter of January 15th! I thought I was dreaming when you told me of the house of St. Michel being quite reorganized, and having a hundred and twenty pupils; but it was no dream. The Cross does not destroy, it only purifies and when far from being feared it is loved, it brings forth courage, doubles energy, and every thing increases and progresses. I was astonished and delighted at the revival of a place which so lately had melted away like a shadow, and all here share my joy. And yet, I must tell you of the thorn that spoils my happiness. The heroic devotion of the few survivors cannot keep them going long. Our measure of moral and physical power is limited, and good-will cannot take its place. Your need of help is what causes my sorrow. . . .

It seemed to Mother Barat that another house, that of Natchitoches, must be suppressed, but when her intention began to be noised abroad, the Bishop of the diocese made so energetic a protest, that it was impossible to proceed further with the affair.

I know [he wrote to Mother Barat] that living as you do with the life of your daughters, you die also at their death. But whilst sympathizing with your sorrow, I cannot resign myself to losing the work I value most. To deprive us of an establishment which for nine years has been striking deep root in our soil, in order to benefit Institutions in Lower Louisiana, which has many resources at its disposal, would it not be, alas, the acting out of the parable which the Prophet Nathan put before King David? . . . For my part [he added], instead of being depressed by an accidental disaster, the effects of which pass away, I prefer to look higher and say: Where Jesus and Mary are now unknown or blasphemed, they must be known and loved. To us, bishops, priests, and religious, belongs the honour of this work. May these names be known and glorified by our life or by our death, but at all costs may they be glorified!

"The Prophet Nathan terrified me so much," Mother Barat wrote, "that I could not hold out." She sent the necessary help to St. Michel, and the critical time of trial was tided over.

We have seen how the convent of Chambéry, alone of those in the Sardinian dominions, had escaped the destructive results of the revolutionary movements in 1848. In 1854, the energy of the Archbishop and the Savoyard people again saved it from the effects of the law that swept away almost all the religious establishments of Piedmont, but in 1855, it was threatened by a new danger. A law was passed subjecting it to Government inspection, and requiring that the mistresses should hold a diploma from the State.

Principle and conscience were both involved in the matter: principle, because of the substitution of State authority for that of the Church and the parents; conscience, because State supervision involved, in this case, acceptance of methods, books and teaching at variance with the spirit of the Society. Mother Barat foresaw that if such State interference became universal, the line of conduct to be followed would be traced out by the Holy See, and its will would form the rule by which the Society would act. But at that time no pronouncement had been made. "I insist all the more on our independence," Mother Barat wrote, "because I am sure that on this point we are following out the ideas of the *most Roman* portion of the clergy."

Acting on the best advice she could obtain, Mother Barat with regret decided rather to close the school at Chambéry than submit to the conditions attached to its existence. She wrote from Paris on October 22nd, 1855, to the Superior:

It is a great grief to me, my child, to reflect that perhaps in a few days you will close your school, after so many years of labour and sacrifice, and just when you and your community were striving to do better still, and to devote yourselves with more energy than ever to the salvation of the souls entrusted to you. But our grief at the suppression must not prevent us from carrying it through. It is necessary on conscientious grounds; our work would no longer be blessed by God. We will therefore make this painful sacrifice to preserve intact

the spirit of our Society. I was very fond of this foundation in Savoy, which opened to us the way into Italy, and what makes the trial so bitter is the thought of the loss it will involve to souls. But God will supply a remedy, for the country is thoroughly Catholic. Till the decisive moment comes, we shall go on raising our eyes to the mountains, whence cometh help, and if the decision is without appeal, grace and strength will be given to us to bear that cross.

Petitions and protests were unavailing, and in the autumn of 1856 the school was closed.

God's will is best, and we wish only to do what pleases Him [Mother Barat wrote]. I cannot believe that we are to part for ever from Savoy and the good Savoyards. We will keep the little seed for them as long as possible hidden underground during the winter-time of tribulations, which will last as long as God wills; then when our spring-time returns, fresh shoots will be put forth, and our little birds will rest once more among the branches. Prayer and resignation are left to us, and we will entrench ourselves in this stronghold. We have always the Sacred Heart as our consolation and support.

The day the school should have re-opened, the parents brought their children, and left them in charge of the Superior, to be transferred by her to Milan, Montfleury, or some other convent. They intended by this act to protest against the injustice of depriving them of what they valued so highly.

In the year 1843, another work had been undertaken at the convent of the Sacred Heart at Chambéry, that of instructing the deaf and dumb. The Institution had been placed under State patronage, and received an annual grant from Government. In 1857, the grant was withdrawn, but Mother Barat continued the work of charity, though the whole expense fell on the Society. This state of things lasted until the annexation of Savoy to France, in 1860. In that year, by an Imperial decree of August 26th, religious communities were re-instated in all their privileges, and on November 5th the school at Chambéry was re-opened, and soon attained its former prosperity.

A foundation which Mother Barat had been wishing for for forty years, was made in 1856, at Angoulême, where devotion

to the Sacred Heart was little known. At the same time another house was established at St. Ferréol, near Besançon, and the foundation of a convent at Perugia was undertaken at the request of the Bishop, Cardinal Pecci, now Pope Leo XIII. Pope Pius IX. also expressed his desire for this foundation, and Mother Barat wrote to Mother Lehon: "The Vicar of Jesus Christ has spoken, and I am sure God will not refuse His assistance to a mission offered us by him who wields His power on earth."

Convents were founded in 1858 at Havana and Chicago. In order to supply what was necessary for Chicago, Mother Barat thought at one time of transferring there the community of St. Charles, but Mother Jouve pleaded against its suppression. She wrote to Mother Barat: "Listen to Mother Duchesne, who from Heaven implores that the poor little house may be spared." St. Charles was spared, and the foundation was made from elsewhere.

In October, 1857, Mother Barat said to the probanists at the Mother House in Paris: "You know that we have long since been asked to make a foundation in Havana. The Governor of Cuba offered me £40,000 for the establishment. I told him we did not require so much money, but that what we did want for it was American religious. Now see how good God is! I have just heard from Manhattanville that nineteen postulants have entered the noviceship, and out of these, three are from Havana. Our Lord then wants to receive glory out of this island, and yesterday a Jesuit, who is Rector of the college there, called on me and declared he would not leave until he had a formal promise." The promise was given, and in the following January the foundation was set on foot by Mother Hardey. "I am told," Mother Barat wrote to her in November, 1857, "that there is some danger from yellow fever, but this almost miraculous reinforcement cannot but raise our confidence, and lead us to trust every thing to the Sacred Heart."

Mother Barat's last journeys were made in the years 1855, 1856, and 1857.

In 1855, she went to Kienzheim, where she arrived on the eve of the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, June 28th. The three years that had passed since her last visit, had left their mark of care and age upon her countenance, but there was the same deep peace in her expression. Her first words were: "Do you remember, dear children, that I told you when I saw you before, that if I knew there was a faithful and generous soul to be met with even at Monomotapa, I would cross the ocean to find her? This is why I was so anxious to come here now, for it is not necessary to go so far afield. I can find what I want amongst you." Her words on the eve of her departure were: "Let us imitate Gedeon's soldiers. If on our road we meet with some consolations, some refreshment, let us be satisfied to take up a few drops in the hollow of our hand, without stopping to bend the knee. For instance," she added, with a smile. "We are together here to-day, this is the refreshment. To-morrow we shall part to march on and fight."

She intended to have gone to Riedenburg, but as her health made it impossible to take so long a journey, she came back to Paris by Metz, where she arrived on July 22nd, 1855. The children had prepared a joyous festival for the feast of her patron saint, which coincided with her arrival, and the sight of them seemed to put fresh life into her. "Our Blessed Lord and children are all I care about now," she told them and she thanked them over and over again for the pleasure they had given her. "Thanks to you," she added, "I can say that God has given me at the end of my life one of the happiest feast-days I have ever spent." She exhorted them to perseverance and zeal for the salvation of souls, reminding them that a child of the Sacred Heart is never saved alone; she strives to save others as well as herself. "I trust we shall all meet in Heaven one day," she said, "and what a happiness for us, who get there first, to see you all arriving, one by one, in that bright land. Live the life of Jesus, and then, like the valiant woman, you shall 'laugh in the latter day!'"

She foretold that great good would be done by the convent at Metz and by that at Montigny, founded shortly before in

its vicinity, but on condition that the spirit of humility was not wanting to them. "Such is the great mystery that God has hidden from the proud, and revealed to little ones," she added; "I repeat it over and over again, and shall do so as long as God leaves me a breath of life."

The following year she carried out her intention of going to Riedenburg, travelling by Strassburg, Kienzheim, and Baden. Great veneration was shown her everywhere on her journey, for her long labours had made her well known in France, and she was looked on as a saint. The officials at the railway station at Strassburg showed her such attentions and civility, that she was overwhelmed with confusion, and tried to impress upon them that all this was quite a mistake on their part, that she was nothing and nobody. But her protestations were in vain, and she had to submit to be treated as a person of the highest consideration. She arrived at Riedenburg on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen. "How I have been longing to know you," were her first words to those assembled to greet her, "and now that I am here, the journey seems nothing!"

Her arrival was an event, not only for the convent and the nuns and the children who inhabited it, but for all the neighbourhood. On the first day of her visit the Bishop of St. Gall, despite his eighty years, called on her. She knelt before him for his blessing, but, from humility, he could not be prevailed at first to extend his hand over her. He yielded, however, when she insisted, and then said: "It is not I who shall bless you, but the Sacred Heart through me. Oh, may our Lord bless you a thousand times, you and your Society." He spoke only German, and the religious chosen to act as interpreter was often sorely embarrassed to convey to her humble Superior the expression of his warm admiration. A zealous defender of the rights of the Church, Herman Müller, Professor of Law and Philosophy at Würzburg, wrote to the Superior at Riedenburg: "Had I to cross the Alps on foot, I must see your Mother Foundress. Is she not the St. Teresa of our day?" Mother de Limminghe came there from Milan and Mother Beatrix Schneider from Gratz, but in the midst of the joy of

these meetings Mother Barat fell ill, and at her advanced age any illness caused great alarm. "My children," she said, "I came amongst you hoping to bring consolation, and I am only an anxiety. I wished to be of use to you, and instead of that it is I who need your help. Our Lord has given me a good lesson."

As soon as she could leave her room, Mother Barat visited the garden and saw the far-famed beauty of Riedenburg. The magnificent view, including part of five countries, Bavaria, Wurtemburg, Baden, Switzerland, and Tyrol, is bounded on three sides by the heights of the Tyrolese Alps, the snowy summits of which rise above the dark pine-forests. A mountain torrent dashes and foams along close to the convent, and far below the whole of Lake Constance lies spread out in its placid loveliness. "How beautiful it all is," Mother Barat exclaimed, as she gazed in admiration at the scene around her. "How can you help becoming contemplative souls, living as you do in the midst of such beauty! It all raises the soul to God." She often gathered the children around her and spoke to them so fervently that several dated their call to religious life from these happy hours. The meetings frequently took place at the corner of the house near the chapel, under the shade of an old apple-tree, called henceforward: "*L'arbre de Sainte-Madeleine.*" It still bears as a memorial of her visit her own words: "*Je voudrais toujours rester avec vous.*" As her farewell to her daughters, she left them the text: "These things I command you, that you love one another." And as her gaze lingered upon the hills and the lake whilst she drove off, she over and over again repeated: "I never could say how much I love this country." The day was intensely hot, but in spite of the fierce sun she would not leave the deck of the steamer, as long as the turreted and battlemented walls of the convent were in sight.

The next year, 1857, we find her, in July, at Calais. During this visit she spent many hours under the shade of a certain tree—sometimes with all her daughters gathered round her—sometimes with one or another of them alone.

The spot was a favourite one with her because from there the sea and the white cliffs beyond were visible, and she often spoke there to her daughters of her ardent longing to see the love of the Sacred Heart spread in England. There was at that time amongst the community at Calais one who afterwards worked for several years at Roehampton—Mother Dumetz. Mother Barat knew her well, as she had directed her during many years of her early religious life. The following words written for her by Mother Barat, are worth preserving: "Speak little, pray much, go onward always, letting passing things pass by, holding only to what is eternal, and seeking *in all things* only the greater glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who will be to you at death what He has been to you during this fleeting life." On July 23rd, Mother Barat was at Lille, and on her way back to Paris she stopped at Amiens. One who was at that time an English child at school there, and one of the youngest children in the school, writes the following recollections, which give us a glimpse of what the universal feeling was:

I had often heard the nuns of the Sacred Heart speak of "Madame Barat," and some of the old lay-sisters had told me stories about her holiness, her kindness, and the miracles she had worked. All this had given me an intense desire to see her, and I used to pray especially during the Elevation at Mass, that I might do so. At last we were told she was coming, and were all in great delight. If I had heard that an angel or saint from Heaven was to come amongst us, I could not have been more pleased. The great feeling in my mind was that she was "a live saint." I could not imagine at all what it would feel like to be near her, perhaps to touch her. At last the great day came, and we were all in the chapel awaiting her arrival, in our white frocks, and the little caps and white veils which were put on usually only for Holy Communion. To my dismay I was not fortunate enough to get an outside place, for I expected her to come up the aisle giving her blessing like a Bishop; but she glided in very quietly and knelt down on a *prie-dieu* between the benches and the communion-rail, and before I had caught sight of her face it was buried in her hands. She was close to me! How delighted I was not to be in the centre then! My heart was beating, oh, so fast. I kept saying to myself,

"a live saint." I was invoking her inwardly and hoping to get great graces. I mentioned some.

The next thing I remember is that while the little ones were playing at recreation, just under her windows, towards which I had given many furtive glances, though we had often been told it was very rude to look up at windows, she suddenly appeared, and beckoning us with her finger, said : "*Venez mes petits enfants, mais tout doucement,*" and she put her finger on her lips, in sign of silence. We flew. I knew the way well, for I had often been in that part of the house. We ran into her room, and fell on our knees close, close to her. She was laughing, for we were all quarrelling about being closest ; we were kissing her hands, her veil, her habit,—in vain the nun and the lay-sister who were there, were trying to pull us away, saying : "*Ce n'est pas respectueux.*" I looked up, and saw her properly for the first time. I loved her ; of course I thought she read me through and through, and knew all the faults I had ever committed, all the good I had ever desired. I thought she knew I loved her intensely. I was sure she knew she was a saint, and that it must feel very nice to be so dear to God. I do not remember any thing, alas, except my own thoughts about her, and that all the others looked just as happy as I was. Mother Barat went to a tall cupboard, near her writing-desk, and said : "*Voyons si je trouverais quelque chose.*" We all exclaimed, "*Oui, oui,*" and she laughed, and brought us back some pictures, and made us guess why she was amused, but at last explained to us that when the Holy Child was in the crib, He could not (as He was represented) hold a statue of our Lady and a rosary in His little arms, besides crosses, &c., &c., but she said : "*Je l'aime tout de même beaucoup, ce petit Jésus ; acceptez tout ce qu'il vous donne.*" And in giving me my little picture she said : "*Vous aimerez beaucoup le petit Jésus, n'est-ce pas, mon enfant ?*" I said : "*Oui, Madame,*" but felt ready to cry, I hardly knew why, except that I could not stay always near her, and love the Infant Jesus as she did. She closed her eyes for one second before making a little cross on each of our foreheads.

I know we had a grand reception in the school. All the time I kept my eyes on her, and was thinking about her being a saint. I thought her heart was burning with the love of God, like the saints I had heard of, who were obliged to go to the open air, to cool their ardour, and I wished I understood what she was saying to the big ones. She spent one day at the orphanage of La Neuville, and in the afternoon we went there too. I see her still in my remembrance, sitting with all the children and nuns gathered round her. She spoke

with great animation about what the orphans had said in their little address, but I hardly understood. I remember noticing some of the nuns looking so radiant while they listened to her, it seemed as if they were transfigured ; others had tears in their eyes, and I wondered why *they* were ready to cry and the others smiling.

When Mother Barat went away from Amiens, the children cried as if they had lost a mother. This one sight I had of her made me love and venerate her more deeply than all I was ever told about her, before or since her death.

Mother Barat spoke to the community of the early days at Amiens, always so present to her thought. She praised the spirit of humility, poverty, obedience that had characterized those who had laboured there, and called these virtues "the stones of the building, cemented with the love of God." "Where should this spirit reign, if not in the cradle of the Society ?" she asked. "There must be a special stamp upon all who go forth from this house, a mark by which they may be known everywhere."

On August 20th, she was at Lyons, where she wished to hold a meeting of several Superiors of the convents in the south of France. Mothers Granon, de Valencise, Garabis, de Mandon, de Lescure, de Saint-Ferriol, all well-known names in the history of the Society at this time, met her at La Ferrandière, with several other professed religious from the same vicariates.

Mother Barat implored all the Mothers there assembled to revive in themselves and others the fervour of the early days of the Society, and to seek for no reward but that of giving this joy to the Heart of their Divine Spouse. She reminded them that the vocation of religious of the Sacred Heart is to adore, and to repair, and to be victims, and she exhorted them to say by their deeds, even more than by their words : "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema!"

After this, she was no longer able to go to see her daughters. For the future they all came to her in Paris, where her last years were spent.

CHAPTER XLII

THE FEUILLANTINES.

Pierce thy heart to find the key;
With thee take
Only what none else would keep;
Learn to dream when thou dost wake,
Learn to wake when thou dost sleep,
Learn to water joy with tears,
Learn from fears to vanquish fears:
* * * * *
Lose, that the lost thou may'st receive,
Die, for none other way canst live.

F. THOMSON.

IN the year 1854, the Mother House had been transferred to an old convent of Feuillantines, in the Rue St. Jacques. The Rue de Varenne was necessarily too much in the midst of the rush of town-life to be suitable either for the place where the government of the Society was carried on or for the work of the probation. Moreover, the continually increasing numbers of the children of the school left insufficient room for a large community and the many religious who, on their way from one convent to another, were to spend a few days with the Mother General.

Mother Barat wrote from the Rue de Varenne in July, 1852: "Loving solitude, yet never alone; loving silence, yet always in conversation; disliking the world, yet always in contact with it: this is my life! If it were not for God's will, how wearisome it would be!" "This house is like a village inn in fair-time," she wrote again. "There is no knowing where to stow any one away. Never, since I was born, did I see any thing like it." Yet she found time for prayer, and this was

always her great work at the Hotel Biron. Dr. Recamier, whose veneration for her had led him to watch over her health with anxious care, opposed to the utmost of his power her habit of spending long hours in the little tribune. We are told that once, when she had just risen from a bed of sickness, he came to see her, and finding that she was there, he went after her, and, putting on an authoritative tone, asked her by whose leave she had left her room, and ordered her to return, making her walk before him and treating her somewhat like a truant child. When he had her safely back in her own chair, he said with the same tone of authority: "And now, Mother Barat, you are to give me your blessing," and he knelt down before her. Throughout this little scene, Mother Barat had been looking half amused, half ashamed. She refused for a long time to comply with the doctor's request, but as he insisted and would not rise, she was obliged at last to extend her hands, and, turning away her head, to say: "O Dr. Recamier, may God bless you." In the evening, a little stove and provision of fuel arrived for the tribune, sent and paid for by the doctor, who got out of all the objections raised by Mother Barat, by saying: "Well, Reverend Mother, there is some one here who has not, like you, made a vow of poverty. Let him have the pleasure of this little outlay."

In June, 1852, Mother Barat lost this friend, who, for thirty years had been a friend in need. She spoke of the loss as a great one for herself and for all at the Rue de Varenne, and prayed for his soul as for that of one who had conferred many great benefits on the Society.

The convent of the Feuillantines, standing in a quiet street through which no traffic could pass, and with its small garden quite enclosed by high walls, was a complete contrast to the Rue de Varenne, and very much more after Mother Barat's heart. She intended to establish there the work of the probation, under the direction of Mother Desmarquest, but just as all was prepared, this faithful and life-long companion of her labours seemed likely to be taken from her. Mother Desmarquest, whose health had been giving anxiety, became

so much worse, in April, 1854, that the last sacraments were administered, and Mother Barat went to Conflans to see her. She found her unconscious, and, after having passed three-quarters of an hour in sorrowful silence at her bedside, she rose suddenly, and went to the chapel. She thought herself alone, and prayed aloud: "My God, we need her, leave her to me, give her back to me." Ten minutes later, she went to the community. "Have confidence," she said to them, and as she spoke, her bright expression added force to her words. "Our Lord will give her back to us. He wants us to pray. Ask Him for a cure that will be entirely miraculous. I am going away full of hope." She then went back to the sick-room. Mother Desmarquest, as she came in, opened her eyes, held out her hand, and even said a few grateful words. "We shall meet again," Mother Barat said, with extraordinary assurance, and her trust was justified. The improvement continued, and Mother Desmarquest was soon quite well.

The following month, Mother Barat came back to Conflans to rejoice with the novices over this recovery. "You must be like the palm-tree," she said. "It gives on earth refreshing shade, but has first raised its head heavenwards. We can obtain every thing from Heaven. Even God Himself seems unable to withstand fervent supplications. You see it is to your prayers that we owe Mother Desmarquest's recovery." In the course of the summer, the probanists and Mother Desmarquest took up their abode at the Feuillantines. The house was blessed on All Saints' Day, and after Benediction Mother Barat consecrated it to the Sacred Heart, praying that it might become a model, as well as a centre and support for all the houses of the Society.

The 8th of December was the ever-memorable day of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Mother Barat's joy was heightened by the thought that no devotion after that to the Sacred Heart had been more constantly practised and taught by her Society, which had every where propagated this devotion. "Let us hope," she wrote, "that better times will follow the proclamation of the

dogma. It will be our harbour of refuge, for the ocean of life is still a troubled sea." "Our duty," she said to her daughters, "is to believe more firmly for those who do not believe, to love more ardently for those who do not love. Happy the eyes which see the things that we see! I may well now say my *Nunc dimittis*." On February 2nd, of the following year Mother Barat consecrated the Convent of the Feuillantines to the Immaculate Mother of God. Kneeling before her statue she read a prayer which she had herself composed for the occasion, a prayer which shows all the ardour of her love; and the tone of deep conviction in which it was pronounced, made the recollection of this consecration one that could never fade from the minds of those present.

It was under these auspices that the work of the probation at the Feuillantines was begun. We have already seen to some extent what this work is, and Mother Barat herself often summed it up as being one of *reparation* and of *preparation*. "You will find perhaps," she said to the probanists soon after their arrival at the Feuillantines, "that the past is not quite what it might have been. If our Lord had dealt out strict justice, perhaps some amongst you might not now have crossed the threshold. But He is merciful, and He saw your sorrow, and good-will. Now is the time to start again, and make a fresh beginning. God's will is that henceforward each one of you should become a *light*, a *model*, and a *pillar* in the houses of the Society; a *light* to enlighten, a *model* to edify, and a *pillar* to uphold. God can well do this work of renewal in six months, since in six days He created the world."

Some fragments of her conversations show what was their usual tone. "I have just heard a piece of good news," she said one day. "We have some saints for our neighbours, the Little Sisters of the Poor. When I compare their work with the little we do, I am so ashamed that I should like to sink a hundred feet underground!" Another day hearing sounds of mirth, she said: "You are right to be joyful. What greater happiness is there on earth than to belong to our Lord, to love Him, and to teach others to do so. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi

was so full of this happiness that one night when her prayer was ended she rang the bell that called the nuns together, and said to them: "Let us rejoice, for we love our Lord, and can love Him still better!" We have even more cause for rejoicing than she had, for our times are worse than hers, and He has withdrawn us from this Babylon." She said sometimes: "To consecrate our hearts to our Lord, is to consecrate them to happiness, and Calvary is the nearest spot on earth to Heaven." On Good Shepherd Sunday she said: "Our Lord, who is the Good Shepherd, has given His life for us who are His sheep. What can we give Him in return? Not, alas, our skin, like those who lead lives of austere penance, but we can at least give Him our wool by sacrificing all that savours of vanity, of comfort, of softness. This is the fleece that we will lay to-day at the feet of our Good Shepherd." "Disciplines to blood, long vigils," she said on another occasion, "are penances that people rush into headlong, whilst minute, every-day fidelity to obedience, silence, observance of rule, guard over the senses, require a constant struggle everrenewed." Speaking on King's Day: "He must be our only King. Let us then establish Him as Sovereign Ruler over all. Let us be like the martyr St. Ignatius, each one a Theophora, a 'God-bearer.' Let us bear Him in our thoughts, our words, our actions, and our affections; let us have no intelligence but to study our Lord, no memory but to remember Him, no heart but to bless Him, no strength but to serve Him: this is to be a *Christopher*, and all the spouses of the Sacred Heart should attain to this."

Throughout her conversation, as throughout her correspondence, there was always a large sprinkling of what is proverbially known in France as "Burgundian salt," a pithy, racy way of compressing a great truth into a few familiar words. Examples of this are in her sayings: "Humility is a needle, that mends many a hole;" "You must not bargain with our Lord; if He asks for a pattern, give Him the whole piece;" "Before you light the fire of the love of God, be sure you sweep the chimney, to get rid of the soot of pride." "Be faithful in every jot and

tittle. The smallest infidelity is like a stitch dropped in knitting. It spoils the whole work."

When she was giving instructions to the probanists, she put so much force and energy into her words, that sometimes her voice would fail her altogether. "Ah," she said once when this happened, "if since my childhood I had only spoken of our Lord! My mother used to say to me, 'Your tongue is the only good thing about you.' Now, alas, I have not even that." During one winter, illness had kept her away from the probanists for several months. When she saw them again, she said: "My great trial throughout has been not to see you, though we were under the same roof. Then I prayed like Father de la Colombière: 'Thou knowest, Lord, how great is my desire to be amongst them, in order to do them good Since Thou keepest me away, take my place there; be their Friend and Comforter. For my part, I am happy to do Thy holy will.'"

When the day of Profession came, Mother Barat shared fully in the joy of those, who were making their final vows: "Your Cross and ring," she said once to the newly-professed: "are the jewels given you by your Spouse. Your feeling must be: *Quid retribuam Domine, pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi? Calicem salutaris accipiam: et nomen Domini invocabo.* Take then this chalice: it is one of suffering. It is filled with your trials, perhaps with your tears. Drink it with joy, calling upon the Lord, and you shall be 'saved from your enemies.'"

"We sometimes," she said to them at another time, "see a girl's character quite changed on her marriage. All that is best in her is brought out by the thought that she must do honour to her husband. And we, my dear children, must we not do honour to our Spouse?"

Her parting words were individual to each. "Remember," she said to one, "any soul is cramped, until it plunges into God's infinity." To another: "Our Lord does not ask you to raise the dead, but to be meek and humble of heart." To two of her daughters, who were leaving to take charge of a school that was not in good order: "I should like to go with

you," she said, "to transform these children by love of our Lord." Some looked back upon her parting words as prophetic. Her farewell to one was to exhort her to patience and resignation to *what God should send her*. Shortly afterwards, her health failed quite unexpectedly, and through long years her work in life was to practise the two virtues thus recommended.

In studying the life of Mother Barat, we have seen her chiefly in her relations with those who to a greater or lesser extent helped her to carry the burden of government, and in trying to see what she was to others in the midst of the familiar intercourse of daily life it is hard to avoid details which seem trivial. But a picture is made up of lines, and the traits preserved in the faithful and loving memories of her daughters should not be lost if they can help in making her wonderful personality live still amongst us.

As her reputation for sanctity grew, so also did her humility. When once, in her presence, a French Bishop publicly congratulated the Society on having such a Superior, she said afterwards: "Yes, my poor children, our Lord could not have made a better choice to keep you in humility." On New Year's Day, 1855, she said, speaking of her Society: "It did deserve a better Mother than I. Why did not God send it a St. Teresa, or St. Jane Frances de Chantal, or any one else worth having?" Mother Henriette could not help ejaculating aside: "Thank God, these saints are still on earth."

She liked on winter evenings to stand at the door of the community room and hold the light by which each one could see her way down the passage to the chapel, nor would she yield it to any one. "I have read somewhere," she said, "that St. Teresa never went to bed without having done at least one act of charity. Well, this is the first I have done to-day."

She watched over the health of all with anxious care. "God wishes," she said, that we should take some care of ourselves. Alas, we must admit that the saints of this century are different from those who went before. Strong constitutions could stand against great fatigue, frightful macerations. It is very different with us as regards bodily health. And as the

Author of all sanctity acts always in the same manner and in the same spirit, we must make up for our deficiencies in that respect by an increase of humility, patience, gentleness, forbearance, and other virtues. Our predecessors were wholesale dealers in sanctity, we must be satisfied with retail. If we were good managers, we might still grow rich, and perhaps even with more safety; for where can pride find a footing in a simple, humble, and common life?" To one of her daughters, who was an invalid, she wrote: "Whilst you take care of your soul, do not neglect the strength of your body, it is my duty to say to you as the Angel to Elias: 'Rise and eat, for you have still a long way to go.'" Once, at Conflans, looking out of her window when snow was on the ground, she saw one of the nuns walking in the garden. She at once took off the shawl she was wearing and sent it to her with the injunction to put it on. At another time she furtively slipped a mat under the feet of a novice, who was writing at a table, or again, in the same way, she would place a *prie-dieu* for those kneeling in the chapel without support. If a religious arrived from a house where the pinch of poverty was much felt, she would herself look over the clothes she had brought with her, and was seen to shed tears at the sight of the well-worn, patched, and threadbare garments telling their own tale of privations bravely borne.

Mother Barat's first visit, on arriving at one of the convents, was to the infirmary, and in Paris she often took on herself the office of infirmarian. It was one for which she had a special love, and she had many little ways of her own for showing her interest in and care for those who were ill. In the last year of her life she assisted with eager anxiety at a consultation of oculists in Paris, and when the verdict returned was a favourable one, it seemed to give her new life. "Ah, my child, you will not be blind!" she exclaimed, tenderly taking her daughter's head between her hands.

Her visits cheered the sick, and made them forget their sufferings. Sometimes she sat for hours by the bedside of one who was ill, as though she had nothing else to do. One day a novice, who was ill with a slight attack of fever, saw

Mother Barat come into her room, but walking with extreme difficulty. "Is that you, Reverend Mother?" she exclaimed in astonishment. "Hush!" was the answer, "say nothing about it. I wanted to make sure that you had every care, and so I came upstairs on my knees, as my feet would scarcely carry me." Another, who had lost for a time the use of her hands, was fed by her like an infant; and she often secreted, in favour of the sick, fruit or other little delicacies provided her on account of her great age. "Take this, and do not tell any one," she would say, laughing to herself at the thought of the trick she was playing on the Sister who was waiting on her.

If she was such a mother with regard to bodily cares and needs, how much more was she so for the mind and heart of those who belonged to her. "If you are in sorrow," she wrote once, "I wish to know it. If I cannot console you, at least I can pray and get prayers, that I may comfort you as best I can." It was one of her maxims that parents who give their children to God receive their reward a hundred-fold even in this world. Her compassionate heart felt deeply for all sorrow and trial, and she did her utmost to bring comfort and relief. Many passages in her letters show how she strove, when a family had met with severe money losses, to find out some acceptable way of returning the money given as dowry in palmier days. Usually, the return she made was by undertaking the education of the little sisters and nieces of her religious. "It is all I have done myself for my family," she said. She had in perfection the art of enhancing the gift by the way it was offered. The Superior of one of her houses had a little niece, whose parents could not afford to pay for her education at the Sacred Heart. Mother Barat heard of this and having arranged every thing, wrote to the Superior on the eve of her feast, saying: "Dear Louise, I know so well your delicacy of feeling and your discretion, that I cannot help giving myself the pleasure of adding a flower to the bouquet, which your daughters mean to offer you to-morrow. This flower will be your niece, whom you may expect in a few days,

and whom you will accept as a child especially entrusted to you by your poor Mother."

We have seen too much to doubt what her spirit was with regard to legacies or inheritance. "Peace and concord in families and the esteem that should be enjoyed by the Society," she wrote to one of her daughters who had just come in to some money, "are far more precious than a few hundred pounds. Bear this in mind in making all arrangements." The death of the parents of her religious was a sorrow that always found more than an echo in her heart; over and over again it became a personal sorrow to her, and her letters are full of the expression of her sympathy. "None of those who have children or relations in the Society," she said once to the novices, "ought to be more than twenty-four hours in Purgatory, that is the time necessary for hearing the news of their death and setting them free by Holy Communion."

An avowal that escaped her lips one day shows what was the efficacy of her own prayers. "I delayed," writes one of her religious, "to inform our Mother General of my father's death, because I knew that for special reasons the news would cause her pain. Some months after, she came to visit the house where I was, and she said: 'You did not write, my child, to tell me of your father's death, and were therefore the cause of his remaining longer in Purgatory, for I should have prayed for him.' . . . Then she added: 'Since I have heard of it, I have prayed for his deliverance. He is there no longer.' My cry of joy showed her that she had said too much. She was silent at once, and I could not succeed in obtaining from her any explanation of her words."

Any call upon her sympathy received immediate response. "I wrote to her once at a time of trial," says one of her daughters, "and immediately received an answer of four pages. It was Good Friday. 'I wished,' the letter said, 'that my answer should reach you on a day when it would comfort you to lay down your burden at the foot of the Cross. I also wished that you should receive it before Easter, for your Mother's joy would be incomplete if she thought that your soul was troubled then."

If any preference could be discerned in an affection so impartial and so impersonal as that of Mother Barat for her whole religious family, it may be considered to have existed towards the lay-sisters. She often said to them : " I envy your little cap. I used to ask for it but it was not granted me." "Will you change places with me ? " she inquired of the Sister employed in the farmyard. " I think that if I had your employment, I should never lose sight of the presence of God, and how happy I should be !" Once she was seen about twelve o'clock sitting in the kitchen and peeling potatoes. " Show me how it is done," she said to the Sister in charge. " I never do any thing in the right way." Another time she kept the cows for the Sister who was looking after them. " Here below," she said one day, " we come first, but I am afraid that the order will be inverted in the next. Some Sister who lives a hidden life very near our Lord in her humble office, will be far above us in Heaven." When she said this, Sister Françoise, the cook, exclaimed : " Is it possible, Reverend Mother ? Can I get so high a place by cooking ? " " Certainly," was the answer " You can, if you will, get above me, for I do next to nothing though I ought to set the example to all."

Her attitude was always one of humility, rather than of command. The lay-sisters whom she had about her, were not always proof against the effect of her extreme self-forgetfulness, mortification and patience. Mother Barat never seemed to notice want of consideration towards herself. " I once heard our Mother General's voice," one writes, " saying very gently from the end of her room : ' Sister Marie, when you have done with the book, please give it to me for my spiritual reading.' ' Yes, Reverend Mother, when I have finished,' was the answer, and Mother Barat went on quietly with her work. I expressed my astonishment at this reversal of the right order of things, and she showed she was very much amused, and began to laugh, but quite inaudibly, that the Sister might not hear ; and when Sister Marie saw fit to return the book, she received her Superior General's grateful thanks." Some years later this Sister fell ill, and no words could express Mother

Barat's tender care for her. After her death, she was heard during the night sobbing, and saying: "My poor Marie! my poor Marie." This sorrow was all renewed on the death of Sister Agnes in 1863. "I have lost my faithful companion," she said, and her loss was one of those Mother Barat felt most keenly in her extreme old age. For some days she could neither eat nor sleep.

Her way of asking for any thing was usually: "Would you be kind enough, Sister, to do this for me,—if it does not tire you,—if it does not put you out,—if you have time." Once when she left Rome, a young lay-sister from the Villa Lante, a peasant girl from the Campagna, melted into tears. "This holy Mother never ordered me to do any thing," she sobbed, "she used to ask me: 'Sister Angelica, pick a little grass if you can!' She might have said: 'Be off, and pick some grass.'" On more than one occasion, she knelt at the door of a room, in which the lay-sisters were assembled, and kissed the feet of each one as they passed out. It was in vain that Mother Desmarquest remonstrated.

Two or three years ago, at Aix in Provence, died an old Sister, ninety years of age, Josèphe Vacelet, who in her young days was at the Rue de Varenne, when Mother Barat was unable to walk. She said:

I was very strong and active, and was so happy as to be chosen to help to carry our Mother General in her basket. Alas, one day, I slipped, and the basket fell, at the risk of grievously injuring our Mother. One of the Mothers who was standing by, scolded me for being thoughtless and clumsy but our venerable Mother took my part, and, quite forgetting the danger she had been in, thought only of excusing me, saying: "Please do not scold this poor child; she was so frightened." She thought only of the trouble to others, and never, whatever business she had on hand, or whoever was waiting for her in the parlour, did she show the slightest annoyance at our delay (involuntary, it is true, but often real) in fetching her.

My employment then was in the scullery, and if I broke something, which happened often, Sister Françoise would scold me, but good-humouredly. At last she said she "must tell our Mother." So one day our Mother General, when I was rolling her in her basket, made

me a little sign, beckoning with her finger saying: "My good little Joséphe." I knelt down beside her. "Tell me," she said, "how many things have you broken?" I told her at once, one after the other. Then with a very kind smile she said: "Is that all? Make yourself easy, my child," and then she gave me her blessing.

Sister Vacelet spent ten years at the Rue de Varenne, and her intercourse with Mother Barat left such indelible impressions that when all else had faded from her mind that name was enough to throw a passing ray of light over the "dim spirit." One day a Sister came to tell Mother Barat that she had been so unlucky as to break a glass that was already cracked. "There was a star on it," she added. "And you made it into a sun, my child," said Mother Barat brightly, and this was all the scolding she received. When on another occasion a lay-sister was sent to her for correction, and came in some trepidation, Mother Barat looked at her for a moment with her kind and searching eyes and said: "My good little Sister, I love you very much." That was all, and the incorrigible Sister dated her conversion from that hour.

She had a kind of instinct for finding out when people were in trouble. A German lay-sister in Paris was so distressed at understanding nothing that was said, and at not being able to make herself understood, that she did nothing but cry, and was even tempted to abandon her vocation, and go home. "One day," she says, "when my eyes were red with weeping, I met our kind Mother who asked what ailed me. Wonderful to say I understood her, and succeeded also in making myself understood. She looked at me very compassionately, and put her hands on my head, pressing hard. My trouble was gone! She sent me to Conflans, and let me have a French lesson every day from several nuns from my own country, amongst whom was Reverend Mother Gœtz."

Her care of the lay-sisters' health was always most motherly. They were never to be overworked, and when they were old, abundant rest was to be afforded them. It was chiefly in their favour that she gave away every thing she had to part with, her clothes, and even her shoes which she would herself put

upon their feet. She had always an encouraging word to say to them when they were ill: "Well, Sister, our Lord takes you by your weak side, you who were so active, and such a good one for work. You must profit by this time to be more united to our Lord and to His Cross." One day in her old age when she was ill herself, she heard that a Sister was at the point of death. "I must go to her," she said directly, but Sister Agnes tried to dissuade her, and at a loss for an argument said: "Reverend Mother, it is only a lay-sister." "*Only* a lay-sister," exclaimed Mother Barat vehemently. "Has she not a soul as I have? Is she not, as I am, a spouse of our Lord? I make no distinction between high and low;" and she left her own bed to take her place beside that of Sister Dubois.

The love which Mother Barat lavished upon her religious family was lavishly returned. This affection is a thing difficult to understand or picture when the generation that witnessed it, that felt it, has left or nearly left the earth: but it lives on in the history of the lives of those whom she formed. They, while forming others, transmit by a loving tradition this breath of love which she breathed into them. Throughout her life it was Mother Barat's constant aim that she should never stand between her daughters and their love for God. To be a link between God and man was all she sought: *Un trait d'union entre Dieu et les âmes*, as she expressed it. Any thing else she looked on as a theft, as robbing God of what belonged of right to Him. "Let us never put any thing," she once wrote, "between our gaze and Jesus Christ, between our heart and His." Like light through a translucent medium the rays of her love of God were not to be absorbed by any creature. There was to be not even refraction, and the whole love of her heart was to go in a strong, full stream straight to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Looking around her one day at her religious, she said: "How I love you all! Yet you are not my God, for my God is so great, but you are steps that lead me up to Him."

It was in the same spirit that she wrote one day to some of those amongst her daughters who loved her most and were amongst her best-beloved: "An anxiety troubles the peace of

my heart, it is lest I should be the cause of the extreme sensitiveness I notice in you. I pray God most earnestly to give you great detachment and freedom of soul." And in another letter: "Who ever loved His friends more tenderly than our Blessed Lord? Only, my child, we must love Him above all, and you must be always ready to give up your Mother, if He asks of you this sacrifice. We are *His* before every thing."

The truth that "the law of sanctity is the law of separation" was ever present to Mother Barat's mind, and she never lost sight of our Lord's words: "Think ye that I am come to give peace upon earth? I tell you, no; but separation." (Luke xii.) But separation from creatures meant for her, union with her Beloved, and in Him she only loved the more warmly all that she had left for His sake.

CHAPTER XLIII

"SHEEP AND GOATS."

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness:
Let him be rich and weary, that, at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.

GEORGE HERBERT.

AMONGST Mother Barat's letters, there are two series which show her to us in a new light, and, for many reasons, deserve special attention.

One of her first pupils at the Oratoire, in the early years of the Society, was Caroline de Beaufort, whom, as the Comtesse de la Grandville, we met again at Lille, at the time of the foundation in that town. She was the daughter of the Marquis de Beaufort, mayor of Nancy, and her mother was Leopoldine de Mérode. She was idolized by her parents, especially by her father, and her girlhood was spent in the midst of all that can make life happy. She was devoted to art and literature, and her remarkable intellectual gifts were cultivated by her taste for reading. The Greek and Latin classics were her delight, and her familiar acquaintance with the great minds of all time gave a very unusual elevation to her tone of thought.

At twenty, she made what, in the eyes of the world, was a brilliant marriage, but it had been arranged between the heads of the families, and neither her tastes nor her character had been consulted. She had known, till then, but the bright side of life, and sorrow and suffering fell with a dead weight on a soul unprepared to meet them. She was childless and

lonely. She found no intellectual companionship in her husband, and nothing congenial in the circle of the family life led in her new home, his father's house, the Château de Beaucamps, near Lille. All was disappointment, and the bitterness of the reality, after the brightness of the anticipation, seemed to her unbearable.

Caroline, whilst she was still happy, had little intercourse with Mother Barat, but she turned to her in her sorrow, and, for forty years, found her friendship her mainstay in life.

Mother Barat's first letter to her is dated from Paris, January 31st, 1820.

If I had been alone [she says] when your letter came, I should have cried when I read it, at the thought of your childhood, your present position, and my own powerlessness to comfort you, in spite of my great wish to make you happy. I feel most deeply for you, and yet you are pleasing to our Lord by your resignation and your efforts. Be faithful, then, take up your cross, carry it bravely, and our Lord will bear it with you. He will even, I am quite sure, make it sweet.

When Caroline had first left school, she had thought of becoming a nun, and the emptiness of her life, after a few years of unhappy marriage, naturally brought her thoughts back to her former aspirations. But such regrets could be but vain, at best, and might easily be dangerous, and Mother Barat turned her mind from them.

Believe me [she wrote] that, in the state of life in which you are, you may serve and love God with more perfection and purity of heart than many religious attain. Many of those whom God has made use of to do great things, and who have become very holy, even in religion, had been married. Work at your perfection, therefore, with peace of soul, and give yourself up to the good pleasure of God, who perhaps called you to a less perfect state, that you might become more holy by true and deep humility.

Madame de la Grandville's position and character increased her difficulties, for the world was at her feet, and she could not mix at all in society without exercising a charm, which she was far from intending. Sensitive as she was, full of sympathy and appreciation, such admiration could not but cause her some

disquiet. Mother Barat well understood this, and often wished herself at hand to ward off harm. Her letters had, at this time, two distinct aims. The first was to prevent Caroline from growing fond of the world, and seeking happiness in its pleasures; the second, to induce her, at all costs, to cling to her new home and its duties.

I sometimes think [she wrote] that you care a little too much for the world. I know you must live in it, but try, imperceptibly and gradually, to loosen its hold upon you.

She gave her, as a motto and a beacon-light, the words: "God alone, and duty, *i. e.*, family life," and urged her to prefer to live with her husband's parents, rather than elsewhere. An opening occurred for Caroline and her husband to change their abode to Nancy. The former would have looked upon it as a deliverance, but in Mother Barat's eyes it would have been a desertion.

I would rather [she wrote in December, 1823,] see you enduring a long and painful martyrdom. At least, it will end with your life, and it is to be hoped that it will make you holy. God, who sees the extent of your sacrifice, will uphold you, and will not allow your soul to be lost, since you are willing to bear pain for love of Him. Above all, do not yield to discouragement and depression. If you allow fear and sadness to gain a hold upon you, your health will be ruined. . . . Our Lord allows that you should find only emptiness and disappointment in those creatures who should be dear to you. Accept His will. Bear with them, love them, as you are in duty bound to do, but love your God above all else.

Madame de la Grandville's health gave way about this time, and she was threatened with rapid decline. Mother Barat's letters show many alternatives of hope and fear, and some passages were intended to prepare her child for the eternity that did not seem far distant. "The figure of this world passes away," she wrote. The dreams of youth fade. All that is great and beautiful here below is evanescent. Believe me, the sacrifices we have made for God are the only things that stand us in good stead for eternity."

Mother Barat's prayers had followed Caroline while she travelled in Italy, for her health, and their correspondence was renewed after her return. Caroline kept unflinchingly to the line of duty at all costs, and Mother Barat let her know that she was proud of her, and happy about her.

Be brave [she wrote], and God will have pity on you. If your friends are sorry for you and grieve over your lot, what will not the tender and compassionate Heart of Jesus feel? Love Him above every creature. Fear to displease Him. That is the whole law for you.

Yours is a strange position [she says a little later]. Unintentionally you become a snare to many souls, who are yearning for happiness and are attracted by virtue. How pure and austere it should be in you! You are too expansive. Your ways and manner have a certain easy and natural attractiveness. Try to hide it, for even the best people grow too fond of you. It is time that your outward behaviour should be more in accordance with the purity, delicacy, and uprightness of your soul. Give your heart to God, and love those whom you ought to love only for Him. . . . Be prudent, brave, firm as a rock in a stormy sea. Keep out of the way of danger. Trust in God's help, not in the mere fact that you are growing older. Your soul needs only God. Put from you the compensations that creatures may offer you.

You have still [she wrote again], to fight against those natural gifts, which in spite of yourself lead others away from the Sovereign Good. If people would only consider that these gifts are but a tiny grain of God's infinite perfections, how much more excellent they would find the Creator than the creature! [Again :] Now that age has calmed the vehemence of your affections, turn to God with your whole heart. Make creatures stepping-stones to Him, not obstacles in your path. This was what God meant when He gave you so many gifts, and so many means of drawing souls to Him.

In 1827, the Marquis de Beaufort died, after a long and painful illness. His loss was a great sorrow to his daughter who had looked to him for support in all her trials.

After his death Mother Barat wrote:

My dear child, (for you are so all the more now that your father is in Heaven) think that the separation will not last long. A few years more and you will meet again him whom you love. They will pass very quickly. You are at the threshold, for what are centuries, even, compared to eternity?

In 1832, Caroline lost her sister, and her mother. Mother Barat wrote from Rome to condole with her. "Pauline's children are yours now," she said. "Ask God to give you His holy Spirit that you may bring them up in His fear and love. That is the whole man; all else is nothing." In 1827, she had written to her: "You will help all who have need of you, and become the consoler of the afflicted, the providence of the poor, and the mainstay of your family; and all this calmly and in a spirit of faith, which will purify your actions, and remove somewhat of that too natural tenderness of heart, which wears you out, and causes you so much suffering."

When, at his father's death, her husband became the head of the family, he inherited all its great wealth, and Caroline was therefore able to do good on a larger scale than heretofore. She undertook the restoration of the shrine of *Notre-Dame-de-Grâce*, near Lille, which had been desecrated during the Revolution. She helped Mother Barat in every possible way, to make the foundation at Lille, and when, in 1832, the village of Beaucamps suffered cruelly from cholera, she harboured those who were stricken down, nursed them herself, and spared nothing to save their lives. As there were soon too many sick for her unaided care, she established a community of nursing Sisters in a house which she bought and turned, for the time being, into a hospital. When the epidemic was over, she set up a school for the girls of the village in this house, and she provided also for the education of the boys by calling to Beaucamps the Marist Brothers, who later on, in 1850, by her generosity founded there their noviceship. She improved her estate at Boisgrenier so much that from a mere hamlet it grew into a commune and parish, and a church rose on the site of the former chapel.

She gave half her house in Lille to the Jesuits, that they might establish a residence there, and made over to them the whole of her garden on which to build their church. She established a Penitentiary at Loos, and was largely instrumental in founding the convent of the Good Shepherd in Lille. When she had done all this for her own country, her zeal urged her

to help on the work of the foreign missions. She bought a steam-ship for the navigation of the South Pacific Ocean, and gave it to Mgr Bataillon, Bishop of Oceania.

When Mother Barat came to visit her convent at Lille it was with great interest that she watched the progress of Madame de la Grandville's Institutions, many of which owed their origin to her suggestions.

What a life yours is [she wrote to her from Turin, in 1832] ; you always have your own crosses to carry, and God lays on you those of others also ! He has, it is true, given you a strong soul and a feeling heart, and these good gifts, which raise you above many weak characters, lay you under the obligation of becoming a guide and support to others. It is a noble office when this ascendency is used to save souls, and preserve them from the hidden pit-falls that surround them on all sides.

When, as sometimes happened, benefits were repaid by ingratitude, she wrote: "Forget time and look only to eternity. Like the angels we must do good to all but without expecting thanks.

Mother Barat's letters, from 1840 and onward, show that peace had come at length to this troubled spirit, not the world's peace, but that which passeth understanding, the "bitter peace" that is the result and the reward of accepted sacrifice. It came at first in gleams and fitfully, but by degrees grew strong and settled. Mother Barat wrote to her from Rome in January, 1840 :

Is peace still in your soul? Are you faithful in making the sacrifices God asks of you? You will find happiness only in the love of the Infinite Being. Shower benefits on all, console the unhappy, but your heart must be kept for our Lord alone. . . . Let your remaining years be all His. You owe this to Him for the graces He has lavished on His dearest child. . . . We must leave all before long. The torrent of life that whirls us along will soon have brought us to rest in the calm ocean of eternity.

Put from you [she wrote again], all useless things, all that does not tend to God and His glory. No one will wonder at your wishing to be more alone, and you should set apart certain hours daily for prayer and reading, when no one may intrude upon you.

The advice was followed. Caroline's last years, spent chiefly at the Château de Beaucamps, were a time of prayer and retirement. Mother Barat's last letter to her was written in June, 1860.

For long years [she wrote], my intercourse with you has been one of the joys of my life, but a time comes when all sensible enjoyments must be given up, while love grows all the purer and stronger without them. . . . Now, dear child, complete your work; help me by your prayers. Let us go on doing the little good required of us, and may our confidence increase under trials. The thought that we have laboured to save souls will bring sure hope at death.

This, her "only child," as Mother Barat used sometimes to call her, survived her but four months.

It is most truly said, that the skill of the educator is not shown mainly in training docile children, where nature lends itself to the work of the formation of their character and who easily acquire the habits that will ensure the happiness and usefulness of their future lives. To straighten perverse tendencies, to teach self-conquest to the passionate and headstrong, to soften hard natures, and encourage and strengthen the weak and depressed is a task requiring untold patience, and often almost superhuman devotion. Mother Barat's great success in education was shown by her influence over those whose independence of character and insubordination made it a difficult task to bring them up. Only a few days before her death she said to one of the mistresses at the Rue de Varenne who was speaking to her of a child of this description: "I love children like this more dearly than any others;" and she went on to say earnestly: "Yes I give them the first place. She is motherless is she not? My child, do not forget that the Society of the Sacred Heart is founded for children of this kind, it exists principally for them. Their salvation is in our hands; it would be in peril without us."

"Few people," she wrote once, "understand the difficult art of education. It must be Divine to be useful. If we do not rise above self by the practice of the religious virtues we shall fail, and what a misfortune for ourselves and for the souls

entrusted to us!" The secret of her perseverance was in her zeal. "To gain souls to our Lord," she wrote, "we must set all human considerations aside. If—which is impossible—we could go into the dark prison-house in search of lost souls we would go there. But alas, we cannot. At all events let no obstacle, no sacrifice hinder us from preventing some unhappy ones from being overtaken by this fate." In a case where the task was especially hard, she wrote: "We must confess we made a bad choice in doing so much for those who are so—well, yes, so ungrateful. But as Providence has placed us there let us go on devoting to them our labour and care. Few will profit by it but *one soul saved is worth more than our lives.*"

The following episode in Mother Barat's life shows with what persistence she pursued a soul that seemed bent only on its own ruin.

In the course of the year 1842, a girl of apparently from sixteen to eighteen years of age was met upon the road near Valence by two women who, although they did not understand her language, thought that she said she came from Marseilles. They had her taken back there, but it was impossible to discover in Marseilles any one who knew her, or could understand what she said. Her cast of countenance was of a gipsy or Tartar type, but all researches made to discover her antecedents were ineffectual. The affair was taken up by the newspapers, and became a nine days wonder. A Russian lady of position travelled from Paris to Marseilles, thinking that the girl might be a fellow-countrywoman of her own, but the jargon she spoke proved to be unintelligible to her. She was about to return home when the girl threw herself on her knees, and clung to her dress with gestures of such earnest entreaty that the lady's heart was touched. She took her back to Paris and placed her at school at the Sacred Heart.

The stranger learnt French, and received instruction in the first elements of Christian knowledge, for even the existence of God was unknown to her. She was baptised, and in due time was confirmed, and made her First Communion. For two

years, her benefactress continued to make minute inquiries as to her family. Their fruitlessness, however, convinced her of the falsehood of all that the girl herself had told her of her parents, and she declared that henceforth she must support herself, for that she would have nothing more to do with her. And she was as good as her word.

What would have become of Julia but for Mother Barat it is impossible to say, for as time went on, it revealed only in clearer light the perversity, and even malignity of her nature. From the time she was abandoned by her only friend, Mother Barat devoted herself to the task of saving the girl's soul, and if possible, of making her life happy in this world and the next. But to do this taxed to the uttermost even her patience and forbearance. She adopted her as her child, and "Mother Barat's Julia" was the name by which she was henceforth known in the Sacred Heart. More than two hundred letters, written to her by Mother Barat, remain as a proof of the most heroic perseverance with which a spiritual mother ever devoted herself to the salvation of a soul.

Memory and imagination were the best points in the character of this strange being. She had little judgment and a great deal of cunning. Her instincts were coarse and low, and though, thanks to Mother Barat's prayers and watchful care, she did not fall into any gross sins, she was deceitful, mean, selfish, and passionate to the verge of frenzy.

Julia was like nothing in ordinary life. Her faults which came from an overweening, nay gigantic, pride could only be restrained by the power that holiness gives in controlling the fiercest natures. One mistress after another attempted in vain the task of her education. She eluded all their efforts, and when some impression seemed to have been made, by an unexpected turn she would slip, as it were, from their grasp and the whole work had to begin again. Self-interest alone moved her, and falsehood was her ready weapon. She never related the history of her past life twice over in the same way, and the deposition made on oath, at the time of her marriage, was as untrue as all that had gone before. Hell was the only

dogma that came home to her as a reality, and the fear of losing her soul was the only moral check upon her actions. "Why do you take so much trouble about all these good girls of yours?" she used to say to the mistresses. "Save me, if you can; prevent me from being lost. That is much more important." When a fit of fury was upon her, nothing was sacred in her eyes, and she would employ freely calumny against the Society, and even against Mother Barat.

Yet it was a strange sight to see these fits of rage die out, as it were, at Mother Barat's feet, and those who witnessed it thought instinctively of our Lord and the demoniacs in the Gospel. "I have often," writes Mother Perdrau, "seen Julia in one of these terrible passions run to Mother Barat and grow calm beside her, as a child whose clothes are on fire would run to its mother, that the flames might be put out."

Mother Barat often went into the garden when she had finished her letters, and Julia, who had been watching for her, would dart out upon her from some corner, and show her a bird she had caught by climbing up the trees, or flowers she had pulled up by the roots. Mother Barat would welcome her, talk to her, give her sweetmeats and present after present, to pave the way for reproof or good advice.

During her journeys, and even during her retreats, she would write to her, inquire about her, and recommend her to the kindness of those who had to do with her. Her indulgence and partiality for the poor alien were blamed sometimes as weakness, but they were rather an almost superhuman strength. "Great men," says Ruskin, "see something Divine and god-made in every other man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful." It was God's part in Julia that Mother Barat loved, and she strove with all her might to save her in spite of herself.

In 1845, Julia was sent to the school at Beauvais, and in April, the following year, Mother Barat wrote to her:

You know I have told you, over and over again, that if you do not grow humble, you will always be passionate. Now passion makes

people bad, unjust, ungrateful. It is a terrible misfortune to be proud: may God keep you from it, dear Julia.

Your letter pained me [she wrote once], for it showed how proud, headstrong, almost vindictive you are, quite unlike our Blessed Lord, who yet has been so wonderfully good to you. How ungrateful you are towards Him, towards us. You will only be unhappy if you do not change. Reflect upon it, and try hard to become a gentle lamb instead of the ugly little wolf you are now. The forgiveness you ask for [she wrote in 1848], I willingly grant, yet, I must say, your conduct grieves me very much. I am not strong enough either in mind or body to bear more, and I lie awake at night in my trouble about you. I am at a loss to understand how, having two ways before you, one leading to certain happiness in this life, and above all, in the next, you insist upon choosing that which will make you more unhappy than you can imagine, and endanger your eternity.

Love was to be tried in every way to soften the pride and stubbornness of Julia's heart, and Mother Barat insisted on the utmost kindness being shown her by all. She wrote to one of those who had charge of this wayward being: "People are hard on Julia, and expect from her the perfection of a trained religious; the dear child suffers from this." She strove to awaken love for our Lord in her heart. "It is Good Shepherd Sunday," she wrote to her in 1846, "and the anniversary of your First Communion. Have you been to Communion to-day in thanksgiving for the innumerable benefits our Lord has conferred upon you? You were one of the sheep wandering outside the fold. He called you by your name, and placed you in the safest and dearest spot in His domain. Are you a docile, obedient, submissive lamb?" Julia had a certain talent for painting which Mother Perdrau had cultivated by dint of untold patience. She was in a position to maintain herself as a copyist, and in hopes of enabling her to do this more profitably, she was sent in 1852, to America. But she had scarcely arrived at the convent of the Sacred Heart at Manhattanville, New York, than she disconcerted all plans by repaying the kindness of her benefactresses with insolence, ingratitude, and duplicity, while in her letters to Mother Barat she implored to be sent back to France. Mother Barat encouraged her, pitied

her, advised her to set to her painting, and promised to find purchasers for her pictures. "Believe me dear Julia," she wrote, "that I often think of you in my walks in the garden, and at Conflans, but especially before our Lord in my little tribune where you liked so much to come and see your Mother, and talk to her, and tell her your faults and your troubles. I beg our Lord to take care of you as I used to do." She wrote at the same time to the nuns at Manhattanville, begging them not to give Julia up on account of her faults but if possible to find her employment. "I hoped," she said, "that with this wide field before her, she might be provided for, like so many others. But I fear she is an exception to the general rule."

Julia returned to France, and was placed at Conflans under the care of Mother Gœtz, but this also was a failure for again she had recourse to calumny. She had indeed wearied out all her friends, but Mother Barat was still bent on saving her. She wrote to her, and sent her presents, a dress, a hat, a gold watch; she would have given her any thing if she could thus have found the key to her heart that she might open it to God.

Julia's prospects in life became more and more a problem as time went on, and showed how deep-seated were her faults. "I am old," Mother Barat wrote to her, "and when I am gone who will look after you?" By paying her board and lodging, she again placed her in a position to support herself by painting and embroidery, but Julia was too idle to profit by her bounty, and threw up this opening like the others. She spent her time in one convent of the Sacred Heart after another, in each one repaying benefits by insolence, and returning to Mother Barat at intervals for consolation and forgiveness.

A rule of life had been given her, and urgent advice as to her choice of friends and associates. "You have but one earthly possession," Mother Barat wrote to her, "an unblemished name, but I very much fear that you are likely to lose it where you are." Julia grew fond of dress and finery, sold her watch, Mother Barat's present, for a ball dress, and left off for a time practising her religion. When Mother Barat heard of

this, she threatened to be no longer as a mother to her, and to cease her supplies of money. "What an account," she reminded her, "you will have to render to Almighty God, your Judge!" Julia's answer was insolent, and all seemed at an end. However, remorse awoke with the pressure of want, and at the first sign of improvement Mother Barat recalled her to Conflans where she made a retreat, and after this things went better for a time.

Towards the end of 1859, Mother Barat wrote to her: "You must now really think of saving your soul. If you go on leading this easy-going, almost idle life, you will risk your eternity. . . . It is time to atone for the past. . . . You have tried, but you must continue your efforts, and acquire virtues. You are not a Christian otherwise. This is the price at which Heaven is won. Life is short, but eternity is long. We shall meet again if you are faithful."

In the following year, 1860, Julia was married. At that time Mother Barat really felt satisfied and hopeful about her in every respect. She did not arrange the marriage, as some people supposed, and incurred no responsibility with regard to it; but when Julia's intended husband came to see her, it was with great pleasure that she heard of her prospects. "I am more and more convinced that Providence has arranged it all," she wrote. "I have every hope that you will be as happy as I have always wished to see you." Her responsibility and anxiety about Julia seemed over, but unfortunately it was not so. For the five years Mother Barat had yet to live, the wretched woman's misconduct was one of her heaviest trials. The husband was hard-working, kind, patient and persevering in his efforts to keep Julia to the straight path, and make her happy, whilst she, to her shame be it said, added drunkenness to the pride, violence of temper, and extravagance that brought disgrace to what might otherwise have been a happy home.

"Your passions are ruining you, my poor Julia," she wrote. "Have the years you spent at the Sacred Heart, and all the care and graces you received there, produced only these sad and shameful fruits? What a disgrace for you and for us! What

will become of you? You will die, Julia, and what will your eternity be? Such as your life!" For a time she made as though she had cast Julia off, but, as she herself said, "only as God does, when a soul persists in rejecting Him. He is obliged to withdraw, but all the time He pities it, goes on doing it good, and hoping for its return."

Julia recoiled from the pit she found beneath her feet, and Mother Barat's hand was at once held out to help her to regain safe footing. This story of fall and repentance was often repeated. A few days before Mother Barat's death, she wrote her last letter to Julia:

> I wish to see you once more in this world, but it will no doubt be for the last time, for I am nearing the end. I can even feel my life ebbing away, You, on the contrary, are young, but do not forget that the longest life is but an instant, compared to eternity. What folly to give it up to false and deceitful pleasures. You have assured me that you are converted, but watch closely over yourself so as not to relapse. A look towards Heaven, which you are in danger of losing, and the remembrance of your Mother, will stop you, my dear child, at the brink of the abyss. Good-bye, dear Julia. I shall love you more and more if you are faithful.

Julia survived Mother Barat only seven years. She died in September, 1872. Her husband himself avowed that in his conversations with Mother Barat he had acquired something of the spirit with which she had herself watched over Julia, and he never swerved from the devoted effort to reclaim her and save her soul. Thanks to him, Julia's death was a good one. As soon as she knew of her danger, she made a general confession, received the last sacraments, and died in peace.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE MOTHER HOUSE.

The lives of the saints are a world of their own. There are the weights and measures of the sanctuary. There is the peace which is power, and the calmness which is activity. There the axioms of the Sacred Heart are the standards of all deeds, and the world's black is our white, and the world's white darker than dark to us. And there is the fragrance of Paradise, though we do not yet see its flowers; and a spirit in the air which is health to the soul, for it is fresh from the heights of Sion. — FABER.

WHEN, in 1847, Mother Barat had placed Mother Gœtz at the head of the noviceship at Conflans, she said to the novices: "I myself, if I am capable of any thing, shall also look after my little novices. Your Mother Gœtz will let me know all that concerns you. Each time I come to Conflans, I shall see some of you. If there is any thing to find fault with, well, I shall find fault, but my chief work will be to encourage you. Our Lord must be King over the hearts of all."

Some who looked on, and had not Mother Barat's discernment, might have felt surprise at seeing the chief hopes for the future of the Society — for whatever is to be hoped for the future of a religious body must exist in germ in its noviceships — entrusted to one so retiring, so self-distrustful, so shy. But this exterior reserve concealed treasures untold of mind and heart. "He that shall overcome," says our Lord, in the Apocalypse, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God." The work of self-conquest, begun in the school at Montet, and carried on in the noviceship, and afterwards at Besançon, had given Mother Gœtz a self-mastery that

made her able to exercise an irresistible influence over others. "From my first entry into religion," writes one who was a novice under her at Conflans, "I was deeply touched by the respect she showed towards the souls of others, by the way she instinctively understood one's meaning, and by her gentleness. Her humility was perhaps what struck me most exteriorly, and it showed itself, more and more, as one came to know her better; but this humility was only the groundwork, the firm basis, of a strength of energy which subdued, as well as captivated, those she had to deal with. When energetic action or speech was necessary, she, whose voice, to use the words of the Prophet, 'was not heard abroad,' had power to impress deeply on the hearts of her hearers the truth she wished to enforce. The spirit of prayer pervaded her whole being, and the mere sight of her grave and simple dignity recalled wandering thoughts to God, and her few and brief words always carried weight. A perfect life is a happy life, — wait; sooner or later, truth makes us free; let us learn to put up with our Lord's delays. 'If He should slay me, I will hope in Him.' 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice'—These were amongst the sayings most frequently in her mouth. When Mother Gœtz had sown the good seed in a soul, she watched over its growth with unwearied patience and gentle care. Order, accuracy, precision, the most exquisite finish were the outward expression of her intense love of regularity. But there was nothing in her, narrow or petty, rather a magnificent breadth of soul. This, with consummate tact, keen observation, and a manner of speaking which, though somewhat hesitating, was attractive from its simplicity and direct truthfulness, were the powers by which she maintained, at Conflans, a high standard of religious virtues, and made every one happy. Under her government, it possessed that 'tranquillity of order' which St. Augustine uses as the definition of the peace of Heaven itself."

Mother Barat wrote to her from Rome, in 1850:

Your mission, dear Josephine, is a beautiful one, and worthy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Rely on His help. The freer your actions

are of self, the more there will be in them of our Lord, and, though every one may be full of faults, you will see that all will go well; for God's action is necessary in dealing with souls. The elements obey man, but souls are the domain of Him who created and redeemed them. He wills, no doubt, to make use of us for them, but only as instruments. Their movement comes from Him alone. Leave it to Him, then, to act. The farmer tills the ground, to prepare it for the seed, but when it is sown, he only waters and protects the plant. We must do likewise.

When Mother Gœtz was first made Mistress of Novices at Conflans, Mothers Desmarquest and Coppens were both there, as well as Mother de Charbonnel, who soon afterwards completely lost her sight. But she was still able to be of use, for her memory was unimpaired and her mind clear. The novices looked on her as a "walking encyclopædia," and her treasures were always at their disposal. "It is well," she used to say, "that God leaves me the fruit of other minds. I can thus make myself tolerable, and draw some souls to the Sacred Heart." Her humility made her take this view of herself, for she never dreamt that a far higher charm than the beautiful passages which she recited from the poets, lay in the loveliness of a childlike virtue, such as hers, carried in all its fresh innocence into old age. One of the novices said that whether they looked at her praying, or meditating, or sitting alone and rapt in the thought of God's presence, or whether, as they gathered round her and hung on her lips, she told them stories of the Revolution with that delightful youthfulness of thought, which was characteristic of her, she always seemed the very type of interior life, and of that blessed innocence to which our Lord promised the Kingdom of Heaven.

Sometimes, after her stories of the Reign of Terror, she would add: "There are very likely worse trials in store for you than those I have gone through. You must lay in a fund of energy to meet them with, and when they come, remember that you are all-powerful over the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ your Spouse. It is for this you have the name you bear."

In 1848, she was operated on for cataract; but though her sight was restored for a time, it failed again, and soon all

was again dark. Her patience never failed, and she was most ingenious in devising ways for making herself useful to the last. The latter years of her life were spent at the Feuillantines. In 1856, her strength gave way, and in August she received the last sacraments. Timorous as she had been throughout life, she had no fear now of death. On the 17th, the end seemed near, but she had full consciousness. Her last advice was: *Fidelity in every thing and always.* Mother Barat was at Kienzheim, and was unaware of the gravity of Mother de Charbonnel's illness. When the news arrived that all was over, the Superior, Mother Garabis, fearing the effects of the shock on Mother Barat, tried to break it to her, but the latter interrupted her. "Ah," she exclaimed, "Mother de Charbonnel has always been my consolation by her humility and obedience. She has never caused me the slightest pain, and now she is receiving the reward of so much virtue; her triumph in Heaven has begun." "Yes," answered Mother Garabis, "she has gone home; her exile is at an end. You knew then she was dead?" "Dead!" Mother Barat cried, as if to pass it off. "Oh, let us pray for her," and a flood of tears testified to her grief.

Another blow followed close on this, in the death of Mother Emilie Giraud. In the previous November, Mother Barat had written: "I thank our Lord that He leaves me at least some of our first Mothers, and my daughters of long ago, especially my Emilie." But it was not to be for long. Mother Emilie had been formerly Superior at Poitiers, but of late had been transferred to Lille. Even in her old age she kept the characteristics which in her youth had made her so dear to Mother Barat. She was still the "little Emilie" of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut. On the day when, at Lille, the fiftieth anniversary was being kept of her Profession, Father Renault said to her: "My wish for you, Reverend Mother, is that you may regain the fervour of your noviceship." "But, Father, I have never lost it," she answered quickly, with an ingenuousness all her own. When Mother Emilie was twenty-four years of age she had a dangerous illness, and thought that she was dying, but she heard, or believed she heard, our Lord say

to her: "No, twice again." Since then twice four-and-twenty years had come and gone, and when, in the summer of 1856, she suffered from constant pain she thought her hour was at hand. It was so. On the feast of the Assumption she received Extreme Unction, and slept in the Lord on the 27th of the same month. "What a sword has pierced my heart," Mother Barat wrote, "in this double loss of Mothers de Charbonnel and Emilie! Help me by your prayers. The words 'God wills it,' check all complaint; only the pain remains; His goodness does not forbid this."

In the following year Mother Barat lost also Mother Thérèse Maillucheau, who died at Marmoutier where the last six years of her life were spent. They had been years of prayer and silence. "To talk to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is indescribable joy to me," she wrote. "Hours seem like minutes, and the time is never long enough." There, to use her own words, "contact with the Heart of Jesus brought back warmth to her old heart as we warm back to life a half-frozen bird."

Mother Barat's last letter to her, dated June 23rd, 1855, contains the following: "The Sacred Heart burns up all our faults in a furnace of love. *Ama et fac quod vis*, for if we love we shall do only the will of our Beloved. I hope, my old and dear child, that we shall meet once more on earth, and then talk over the mercies of Him who has done so much for us."

This hope was not realized. Mother Thérèse had long been infirm, but when her strength allowed she employed herself in teaching Latin to any of the boys of the poor school whose tastes pointed to a possible vocation to the priesthood. Otherwise, her whole time was spent in prayer. But the end was come. Quoting the words of the Office of St. Agnes, she said of herself: "I think I may say, 'Behold, now I see that which I have desired; now I possess that for which I had hoped," and soon she could add: "Now I am united in Heaven to Him whom I loved with my whole heart upon earth."

In July, 1855, she passed from this world to the next without an agony, absorbed in the thought of God, and with her eyes fixed on Him, "as the pilot," to use a simile of her own,

"keeps his gaze riveted to the shore, where he is to bring his ship to harbour, and gives no heed to what might distract him from the one thing in view."

The deaths of so many of those who had "toiled and wrought and thought" with her for so long, and through such troubled times, could not but make Mother Barat count upon her own death as not far off, and when she entered upon possession of the Feuillantines, in 1854, she spoke of it as "the little nest where she was to die." But when, after the Crimean war, the feverish energy of the population of Paris was turned into a safe channel by schemes for demolishing and rebuilding much of the old city, the site of the convent was required to make way for new streets and squares.

After fruitless and troublesome negotiations, and searches for another house, Mother Barat at last decided upon building a Mother House upon the property that the Society already possessed as belonging to the Hotel Biron. The frontage was to be upon the Boulevard des Invalides, and the spot chosen was as far as possible from the Rue de Varenne. The plans were made out by Mother Henriette Coppens, and were framed upon the model of the Feuillantines. But as this would be a work of time, it was necessary to find a temporary home. On March 2nd, 1857, Mother Barat wrote: "The workmen will be in upon us to-morrow, and very disagreeable it will be. Happily St. Joseph, at the beginning of his month, has found a house for us. It is small, but will do for a time; at least we shall keep together, and shall have room for ten or twelve aspirants, but we cannot take possession till next month. We shall be safe there, which we should not have been in a house that is being cut in two."

This house, which Mother Barat used to call a "little nest," was in the Rue Cassini, and in April she removed there from the Feuillantines, with as many others as it would contain. Her first care was to arrange the chapel. "All that mattered to us," she wrote, "was that our Lord [*le Maître chéri*] should have a fitting abode. His dwelling is a lowly one, but we have Him, and that is every thing."

On June 29th, 1857, the first stone of the new building was laid. It was roofed-in before winter came, and in October, 1858, it was ready for the community. In June of that year Mother Barat had written: "All Saints will see us, I trust, at the new Mother House, and I should like a novena before this feast to be made for our intention to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary Immaculate. We wish to obtain that all who live there may sanctify and strengthen the Society more and more by their religious spirit and their virtues, for it must be the centre whence the true spirit of the Society will spread abroad."

The Mother House thus completed has been from that day to this like the heart of the Society. All flows both to and from it, and it is the focus of the true life of the body, the home of the wisest, holiest and most experienced of its children, and the young religious draw from this well-spring the waters of the fountain of life. There the traditions of the Society are maintained in all their purity, and there the example is set, which makes the life and spirit of Mother Barat live on in the generations that are always succeeding one another in every part of the world. Yet dear as the house is to every member of the Society, the true children of Mother Barat know that, like her heart, theirs must be fixed on no earthly possession. If there is no dearer spot on earth for them than their Mother House, that Mother House must be where God wills, and though they cling with devoted affection to the walls which their foundress raised, and within which her last years were spent, the possession of even this house could not weigh with them in the scale against any infraction of the Rules of the Society, any diminution of its fervour, any change of its spirit.

The life which Mother Barat lived henceforth within these walls was one of very uniform activity. She always rose at five, even if her nights were, as they often were, sleepless. Meditation, Mass, Holy Communion followed, and she usually left the chapel only at half-past eight. She kept up her large correspondence most regularly, and generally spent five or six

hours a day filling sheet after sheet of paper with her rapid, firm handwriting, whilst her countenance reflected the various thoughts and emotions passing through her as she wrote. Several thousands of these letters are preserved. Sometimes she stopped writing for a few minutes to pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. In several of her letters, we read: "I must cut short what I am saying, as I want to pray." Then, leaving every thing to go to the chapel, she went so quickly that she might be said rather to run than to walk.

Her interruptions were continual, but she went on writing: "I should like to be able to do four things at a time, like Julius Cæsar," she said once. "I often listen and write together, but even this is too much for my small mind. So you will be indulgent to my shortcomings, will you not?" Her letters are always clear, simple, methodical, and gentle. Their great charm is the way in which they reflect her soul, her mind, her heart, light up the trials of life with the reflection of her own love of and trust in God, and lift the mind and soul above earth's "miry ways." She could not come in contact with a soul without raising it to higher things, nor treat any question without throwing light upon it. The letters bear in every line the impress of her own strong common-sense, that gift without which, as Cardinal Manning says, "all other gifts are dramatic and unreal," that common sense, in which "man's greatest powers return again to the intuition of an instinct, . . . the power which by instant perception seizes on the moment and the season, moulding and applying means to ends at the juncture and the crisis." But her natural gifts, great as they were, could never afford the full explanation of her power, for this lay in her sanctity.

One of the most important points in the government of a religious body lies in the choice of Superiors, and of those who help them in the government, and this, for Mother Barat, was especially a work of prayer. "It was before the tabernacle," writes one who lived with her, "that she regulated all the affairs of the Society. It happened several times that, after praying, she suddenly made quite different arrangements as to

the mission she had intended for one of her daughters. 'God wills it so,' she said when making the change known ; and the tone in which the words were said left no doubt that the order was indeed from Heaven." She never required obedience but in the name of our Lord, or for His sake. "Give yourself to God without reserve or restriction. Then if He places you in Paris or at Constantinople, it will be all the same to you, because everywhere you will find your God and the souls He has redeemed." It was one of her maxims, that "a religious of the Sacred Heart should have no other country than the whole world and Heaven." Cowardice or pusillanimity on this head seemed to her to have something sacrilegious in them, and when she met with resistance, her usual meekness sometimes gave place to vehement indignation at the injury done to the Sacred Heart by this want of generosity. "You are not obedient, because you are not humble," she wrote to one of her daughters ; "in this you are unfaithful to your vows. What is to be done with you ? Where are we to put you ? How, dear child, can you consider yourself a religious if you will not bear suffering, if you flee from the Cross. Read the *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary*, compare yourself with her ; then act and be converted."

She did not approve of attempts to escape office. "It is false humility in you," she wrote to a Superior, "to shrink from trouble and responsibility. You ought to be glad to bear your cross instead of throwing the burden on another, who has sinned less than you have done. Devoted souls are needed by the Society. Be glad that God gives you the opportunity of making more sacrifices, and thus showing a greater love."

A request to exchange the office of procuratrix for that of cook, met with the following answer : "Yes, if the cook can take your work off your hands." Then more seriously : "How can you have dreamt of such a thing, knowing as you do the need the Society has of subjects ? There is a large mixture of illusion, if nothing worse, in all such schemes for a false perfection outside the beaten track. Stay where you are in peace."

The thought of God's will, of the happiness of giving every thing, were the motives for generosity which Mother Barat put before her daughters at a moment when they were asked to give up what was dear to them. She wrote to one amongst them: "If not a hair falls from our head without God's will, how much more must a change of house come from Him? Who could then complain? Should we be religious? Later on, I hope you will understand the gentle and loving foresight of the Sacred Heart of our Lord. How happy you will be at the hour of death to have left all for God!"

She sent once an order to go to a place, humanly speaking unattractive, and the answer she received, though not unreligious, was somewhat melancholy. Mother Barat, who knew the soul she was dealing with, left the decision to the person herself.

I own [she wrote] that I had reckoned on your devotedness and love for the Society leading you to come to our help in this time of stress; but if the sacrifice is too hard a one, and interferes with your peace of soul, I should not hesitate to cancel your appointment, which I send you conditionally only. I should no doubt have difficulty in supplying your place, but our Lord will help us. If, on the other hand, you decide to go, I have arranged every thing to sweeten your exile, since you look on it in this light. Indeed, the whole world is exile for us. I feel more every day that we have but one true home, Heaven.

The appointment was accepted. How could it be otherwise after such a letter!

The docility and ease with which she was obeyed surprised no one but Mother Barat herself. "I am always astonished at their submission," she said once; "it shows that it is a higher hand than mine that moves them." "I can throw them like balls from one pole to another," she said, speaking of two of her daughters. At a time when many deaths, remarkable for their happiness, had occurred in the Society, she said: "I have tried to find out why all die so happily, and I attribute it to the fact that, though we have so many faults, there is in the Society an admirable spirit of obedience, a devotedness, and spirit of sacrifice, which redeem many defects in God's

sight. I am often in admiration of it myself. One word, a stroke of a pen, is enough, and some one, nay, five, six or ten persons leave every thing at once, without so much as asking why. And this not once but twenty times, nay always." Union with our Lord was in Mother Barat's eyes the first requisite in a Superior. "Be a spaniel at home, a hound abroad," she wrote to one. "In your heart at His feet in adoration, with others active and zealous. It is difficult, no doubt. It would be easier to be always one or the other, like the Carmelites or the Sisters of Charity; but this is just our vocation." "To be a good Superior," she said at another time, "it is essential to be dependent on our Lord in all we do. We should spare no pains to draw into our hearts the spirit of Jesus Christ, *dulcis hospes animæ*, and to make Him the Master there, we ourselves shrinking back into a corner, as the little servant stands aside, but within sight of her mistress, that she may always quickly do her bidding." "Get rid of self to make yourself over to our Lord, and I assure you, you will govern well." "We must feed souls with the food they need, our Lord Himself." "We shall bear fruit only in proportion to our union with the stem, Jesus Christ." "The Superior must be the cross-bearer of the community." These sentences, fragments from her letters, show the spirit which she inculcated.

Prayer, then, was the foundation in Mother Barat's eyes of the life and work of a Superior. As to her mode of action and administration, we have much admirable teaching. "The longer I live," she wrote, "the more convinced I am that the best government is at once firm and gentle. But gentleness is not softness. Firmness is necessary to separate nature from grace, but it must be done without tearing holes, for these would have to be mended afterwards, and so nothing would be gained." She laid down as a general rule: "Lean rather to kindness than to strict justice. A religious of the Sacred Heart should be led by high motives: duty rather than fear. If excess there must be, our Lord prefers it on the side of gentleness and indulgence. O Lord, what would become of us if Thou hadst treated us as we deserve!"

On the other hand, she taught that under weak government all goes to rack and ruin, that always to throw a veil over faults is to hide fire under ashes, and so prepare an outburst that must come sooner or later. She inculcated upon Superiors that they should be satisfied to say little, to exert influence rather than command, to leave each one as far as possible freedom of action in her employment. "We must deal with women," she said, "as the angels deal with us, keeping ourselves out of sight and unperceived." As to temporal matters, "It is right," she said, "sometimes to cast a glance on our little earthly treasure-store, but quickly we must raise our hearts to our true treasure, our Lord in Heaven!"

Promptness, accuracy, and the most scrupulous and religious probity were always her rule in money matters. She wrote to Mother de Bosredont at Marmoutier, in 1851: "You must pay your workmen regularly. The bad season is coming on, and hard times are doubly hard when the poor have to wait for their wages. I could never be resigned to the trial of keeping workmen waiting for pay, first, because it is imprudent to undertake any thing beyond our means; secondly, because it is unjust. This is why debts are always my heaviest cross."

The spirit of poverty, the bulwark of religious life, was never to be lost sight of in the plans for any buildings undertaken by the Society. Mother Barat stopped the progress of a convent that was being built in the Gothic style of architecture, and setting appearances aside for the sake of her favourite virtue, she had it completed in a simpler style. For the chapels nothing was too costly that came within the means at her disposal, but the convents were to be simplicity itself. In little things, as well as in great, poverty was always guarded by Mother Barat with jealous care. "I would rather," she said, "that this little Society, visibly blessed as it is by God, should no longer exist, than that its spirit of poverty should be weakened. That is the curse of communities." There was to be nothing approaching to luxury in the schools. "I must tell you," she wrote to a Superior entrusted with a foundation, "that your ideas are considered too grand. The parlours are not

simple enough, and they say the children are in danger of looking down on their simple country homes, because in the convent they have seen too many pretty things."

This true love of poverty could only exist in perfection in a heart as large as Mother Barat's. It springs from an intense realization of St. Ignatius' doctrine of the true use of creatures, and of the obligations of religious life. The religious renounces worldly goods, and therefore uses creatures aright only inasmuch as they are necessary. But that which remains is devoted lavishly, generously, and joyfully to the service of God, in His Church, or in His poor. Mother Barat had a royal soul, and disposed right royally of the resources at her command. She loved to give, and her way of giving doubled the value of the gift. Her whole life was passed in acts of generosity. Let us give a few instances.

One day, a Superior was forced to confess that the anxiety of the burden of debts prevented her from sleeping. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice," Mother Barat said, "and all these things shall be added unto you." The next, day just as the Superior was leaving, she said, laughing: "All the same, I should like to give you some good nights by paying your debts; I wish I could pay them all." Then she gave her a large sum of money, and added: "If when March comes you are still in difficulties, I will manage to free you from them. You will still have many cares which, alas, I shall not be able to remove." Once, when she was sending some money to the United States: "Pity me," she wrote, "for being able to do so little to help you. You Americans know better than I that we have no Californian gold-fields in the Society." In this way whatever she gave, it was always with an implied reproach to herself for doing so little.

The least deviation from the spirit of the Constitutions found her inflexible. On one occasion when she came to visit a convent she was offered a very handsome carpet which the nuns had themselves worked, but at the cost of many exemptions, not only from common life, but from the obligations of their Rule. She knew the secret, and spoke with great

earnestness of poverty, and of the obscure labours which are dear to the Sacred Heart. Then calling for the carpet, she said : "Dear children, as this is so, we must destroy either this piece of embroidery or our Constitutions," and taking the scissors, she herself began the work of destruction : "May every thing thus perish," she added, "which would lead us away from the spirit of our Society."

To defend the spirit of the Society, its Rules and Constitutions, from any thing that could injure them, was her life's work, and she combined the utmost vigilance with the most tender charity. "It is a very serious fault to believe evil too easily and without proof," she once wrote, "but it is still worse to refuse to believe at all, and to shut one's eyes." If it came to her knowledge that any thing was considered faulty in the action of those in charge, she always began by making sure of the facts. She sent to a Superior a list of charges brought against her government, and bade her take her own cause in hand. "I know you better than any one else does," she wrote, "and to begin with, I tell you that I do not believe a word of this. However, I wish you to give me a short explanation on each of these points, and to re-establish the truth of things, as you see it in the light of the humble Heart of our Lord. I know it will be painful to you to do this, because you shrink from even the shadow of a discussion with your first Mother. But make yourself easy. I know your religious spirit, and I ask it of you as an act of obedience to your Mother who loves you."

When she was certain that one of her daughters was in the wrong, she told her so, very frankly, and those whom she loved best received the most correction. "If I had your perfection less at heart," she wrote to one, "and if you were not one of my dearest children, I should have passed this over in you, as I have done in the case of some others. But in your case I cannot. I am so anxious that the Sacred Heart may take delight in your fidelity. Perhaps this is vanity, and yet I think I care more for our Lord's interests than for my own."

Her reprimands were very forcible, and to hear the energy

of her words, when she was really roused, was a revelation of the intensity of feeling hidden beneath the calm of her usually gentle manner. She wrote thus to one whose conduct made her admission to Profession doubtful: "I will not have half-and-half religious in the Society. Those who wish to remain must sanctify themselves, otherwise it is better not to be bound by vows, as less guilt is incurred. Think it over. The mysteries of God's immense love for us, which we meditate upon during Holy Week, whether it be the institution of the Holy Eucharist or Calvary, will help us to understand what is our debt of gratitude. Can we wish to throw away so many graces? I have said enough, and will stop here, but I shall pray for you and hope."

She wrote of one, of whom she had received complaints: "Send her to me. I will talk to her, and ascertain what is God's will for her. Pray that I may control the indignation I feel at such unfaithfulness. Why did she vow to belong to our Lord? No one forced her to it. How ungrateful we are!"

After such interviews, the person in fault usually left Mother Barat, subdued by her energy, and won by her love. "It was like our Lord Himself among men," was the remark made by one, on leaving her room. When reproof had been well accepted, Mother Barat gave every encouragement for future efforts, and the past was blotted out. "I have said all I had to say," she wrote once, "now let us think no more about it. Mistakes are nothing in my eyes, if the heart is true. I know yours, and so displeasure is only on the surface and vanishes at once."

Mother Barat could speak and write severely, when occasion required, but her humility suggested other methods of correction, which proved equally efficacious. In one of her visits she found that there was division in a community, and that religious spirit had suffered. She removed the person whose conduct had caused the breaches of charity, and then assembled the community. She spoke to them so forcibly that all melted into tears. "What has become," she asked them, "of all your promises to make the house a garden of

delights for our Lord? How can He take pleasure in the thorns of division? It is not enough to be sorry," she went on, seeing the effect her words produced, "there must be reparation, and it is for me to set the example." So saying, she knelt before the Superior, and kissed her feet, and did the same to each of the community, nor could any one prevent her. Union was restored, and the house was once again a "garden of delights."

It was by no mere figure of speech, that at the time of the proposed suppression of the house at Natchitoches, in Louisiana, the Bishop of that district said that he knew Mother Barat so identified herself with her daughters, that she not only lived with their life, but died also with their death. Every creature of God that came within range of her action had its share of her love for its Creator, and from love of God, the invisible source of good, she made herself, as far as she could, a visible providence for all He had made.

She loved our Lord in those consecrated to Him, to whatever Order they belonged, and lost no opportunity of serving them. Quite at the end of Mother Barat's life, a former pupil of the convent of the Sacred Heart at Lille, Eugénie de Smet, founded the Congregation of the Helpers of the Holy Souls, whose motto, "To pray, work, and suffer for the souls in Purgatory," was so much in accordance with her own spirit. Mother Barat gave her all the help her experience could supply in the difficult task of establishing her Institute. "Oh, that is an ardent soul!" she said once in speaking of her to the probanists. When she was told of the success of some other Institutes, also engaged in the work of education, she wrote: "Let us do our best, try to deserve that God may bless our labours, and rejoice at the prosperity of those working for our common Master." When some complaints were made to her of a Congregation of Italian origin, that had taken the same name and almost the same Statutes as those of the Society, she answered: "If they do better than we do, the Sacred Heart will gain more glory. It is wide enough for many Congregations to find room in it." She made no difficulty in making

known the Rules of her Society to a prelate who wished to found an Institute on the same model. "We ought not to refuse, if the glory of God is concerned," she said; adding, "but it will not be easy to take the spirit of that admirable book. It is in this citadel that we must entrench ourselves." On another similar occasion, she said: "Let them take from us whatever they will, provided only they leave us humility."

In 1862, an appeal was made to her on behalf of some missionary nuns established in Syria under the name of "Sisters of the Sacred Heart." She took such effectual interest in the undertaking that sixty-five Arab Sisters were maintained by means of contributions from her convents in Europe and America. "It would have been a joy to me," she said, "to send a colony of our own to evangelize the cradle-lands of our faith. These good Sisters in Jesus Christ, will very profitably work there instead of us."

No one was forgotten in her prayers, and the great ones of the earth, kings, emperors, and statesmen, had a large share of her zeal. She prayed long and persistently for the Czar Nicholas, and in the same way for de Lamennais. She made a convention with our Lord to the effect, that every time she kissed a little wooden crucifix she wore at her girdle, it should mean: "By the infinite merits of Thy Passion, Lord Jesus, convert, I beseech Thee, Thy two poor servants, Nicholas and de Lamennais." The impenitent death of the latter was a great sorrow to her. "Would he have died thus," she exclaimed, "if I had any power over the Heart of our Lord?"

Effectually backed up as they were by prayer and penance, her conversation and her letters had a great power of changing the heart. Shortly before her death she had a long talk *tête-à-tête* with her doctor, who neglected his religion. What passed, no one knew, but he came out from the interview another man, unable for the time being to listen to any thing that was said to him or to attend to any one else. "What a woman she is!" he ejaculated. "What a woman!" Shortly afterwards he went to his duties.

A former pupil of the Sacred Heart married a Protestant,

and when the first child was born, it was to be baptized in that religion. Mother Barat, as soon as she heard of it, sent to ask the father to come and see her. He had often been before, and used to give her the name of Mother. "Well," said Mother Barat, as soon as this word passed his lips, "if I am your Mother I wish my grandson to be a Catholic." She gained her point. "I cannot refuse Mother Barat any thing," the father said; "this holy woman has such power over me."

A relation of Mother Barat's was director of the military hospital at Ajaccio. He was a free-thinker, and openly mocked at holy things. When his health gave way, and death from consumption was imminent, he still persisted in his refusal of all that the chaplain could suggest to prepare him for eternity. Indeed he made no secret of his annoyance at his visits. But the chaplain, a zealous priest, did not desist, and once in the course of conversation mentioned Mother Barat's name. The sick man had spent fifteen years in Africa, and had seen little of her, but he respected her very much. "She is a saint," he said to the chaplain, and after citing many proofs of her holiness, he pointed to a beautiful crucifix that hung against his wall. "Look there," he said; "Pius IX. gave it to her, and she sent it to me when I was in Africa." The chaplain lost no time in letting Mother Barat know of the sick man's state, that she might write to him. "Her letter," he says, "was a master-piece. It was so persuasive, so admirably adapted to his character and needs, that it went straight to his heart. He read it over and over again, and read portions of it aloud to me and others, delighting to see that we shared his admiration. The next day, he expressed his wish to receive the sacraments, and did so with a piety that drew tears from the eyes of those present. He died in these dispositions, full of gratitude to her who had re-opened his heart to the light and the mercy of God."

Love of the poor was one of the strongest feelings of Mother Barat's heart, and she was never applied to in vain on their behalf.

Clothilde —— had been ten years a girl at school at the Rue de Varenne, but she fell, after her marriage, into great poverty on account of her husband's ill-health. Bit by bit, almost every thing she possessed had gone to meet expenses; even her last treasure, her Child of Mary's medal, had not been spared. But it was all in vain. Starvation stared them in the face, and rent-day was at hand with nothing to pay the inexorable landlord. Her husband, after a long illness, was recovering, but trial and weakness made him irritable, and he threw all the blame of his misfortunes upon Divine Providence. One day his wife said: "I am sure if Mother Barat knew what trouble we are in, she would help us." "Mother Barat is too great a lady to have anything to do with you now," the husband answered bitterly. "If you applied to her, it would only mean another repulse, and we have enough humiliations as it is." Clothilde shed tears in secret over this taunt, but none the less did she resolve to write to Mother Barat.

It was as she expected. Mother Barat was touched beyond words by her letter, and set to work immediately to provide what was most urgently needed; money for the rent, clothes, and any thing she could lay her hands on that she thought would be useful, were despatched without delay. It was the last year of her life, but the eager interest she took in this act of charity might have belonged to an earlier time.

The joy her kindness caused was as great as the sorrow that had called it forth. It led to the return to God of Clothilde's husband, who, in his gratitude, knelt by his wife's side to pray for their benefactress. At the close of the last feast of St. Mary Magdalen Mother Barat was to spend on earth, both came together to thank her in person for all her charity to them.

One who was portress at the Mother House during the latter years of Mother Barat's life writes: "Whatever she was doing, when I went to tell her some tale of distress, she set every thing aside that she might lose no details. 'How are our friends?' she often enquired. 'What are you doing for them? Were they pleased with what you gave them? Did it

make them happy? How glad I am. The poor bring a blessing on the house, and I am at rest because they are always well received here.'

"She always gave more than was asked for. An old man, who came every week for scraps, was in great trouble on one of these occasions, because he owed seven francs for rent, and must pay at once or quit. Mother Barat gave him ten francs, and when I reminded her that seven was enough: 'But he must live,' she answered quickly.

"I once expressed the fear that if she never refused she would have nothing left. 'I would sell the church plate,' she answered, 'rather than that the poor should suffer!'"

Once, towards evening, a portress came to tell how her charities of the morning had been received: "And you waited till now," Mother Barat exclaimed, "to give me this good news! She went off comforted and happy, and you told me nothing about it! It would have done me so much good to hear it earlier!"

A beggar at the street door asked the portress for a few pence to buy snuff, but she thought it would be better to give him bread. When Mother Barat heard of this she was not pleased. She said if the poor man felt the need of snuff, and liked it, he must not be deprived of it. After this she sent him a weekly alms that he might buy some.

No present gave her more pleasure than clothes for her poor people, and she always had a large supply provided for them. After New Year's Day, when the store was replenished, she sent for the portresses or others in relation with the poor, and let them choose what they liked for certain individuals, that all might have their share of the good things of the season. She took such an interest in the distribution, and did it with such delight, that she seemed like the mother of a family providing for her children. A poor man to whom she had given a coat was so delighted with his present that he exclaimed: "I wish I could see the Mother General, I would kiss her feet!" Mother Barat laughed very much when she heard this, and said: "I too should like to see him. Let me know

when he comes." Another insisted on showing off to her a pair of strong hob-nailed boots she had enabled him to buy. She turned them this way and that, and thoroughly admired them, to her own satisfaction as well as to his. One winter's evening she sent for her cloak to give it to a poor old man at the door. "Have you forgotten," they said to her, "that you gave it away this morning?"

One day the cupboard where her clothes were kept was found empty. The Sister under whose care they were was much disturbed. "At last you will be satisfied," she exclaimed; "You have not even a change of linen left. The people you assist are less poor than you. Is it for nothing that you are Superior General?" "I beg your pardon," Mother Barat answered; "the Superior General will easily find some one to supply her needs, but my poor people would have greater difficulty."

Once, when she was seen giving away all that was best amongst her own clothes: "These are too good," some one said to her. "Too good!" she cried out; "too good for the poor! Why, my child, I would give them my skin if I could."

A portress once asked her how she would manage if she were in contact with the poor as the portresses are. "I?" she exclaimed. "If I were a portress I should ruin the Society, and that is why God would never allow me to be one."

An under-gardener fell asleep in the sun, and Mother Barat passing by covered his head and face gently with a pocket-handkerchief. When he awoke he recognized the act. "Oh! Reverend Mother, Reverend Mother!" he exclaimed.

The poor were treated as her best friends, and she was always ready to see them even when she excluded her grander visitors. One day, when she had excused herself from going to the parlour for a great lady, she went a few minutes afterwards to the children of a poor charcoal-burner, stayed a long time talking to them, and asking them questions in catechism. Another time, towards the end of her life, when she was worn out with fatigue, she felt too much exhausted to receive a Roman princess who wished to speak to her, but

shortly afterwards she remembered that she had promised a visit to the washerwomen employed in the house, and she went to them, and recovered strength enough to say a kind word to each.

"It is well to be little and poor with you, Reverend Mother," one of her daughters said to her one day. A portress hesitated to go to Mother Barat with a third application from the same poor girl. Mother Barat heard this and exclaimed: "Have you been only three times to our Lord, Sister? And how does He receive you? Yes, we must give her fresh clothes." It happened that when other things had been provided, no shoes or stockings were forthcoming for the girl. "I will take off my shoes and give them to her," said Mother Barat, "and you give her your stockings, but make haste or we shall be found out."

A poor sick woman had so great an objection to going to a hospital that Mother Barat defrayed all expenses for having her taken care of at home. She used to come sometimes to the convent, and once, when a long interval had elapsed since her last visit, Mother Barat sent for her, went down immediately when she heard she was there, sat down close beside her, took her hands, and dirty though she was, kissed her affectionately and gave her some useful thing which she had brought down for her in her pocket.

After two years of this constant kindness, the Sisters began to suspect that the woman was sometimes the worse for drink. Mother Barat long refused to believe it, but when it was at last brought home to her, she made up her mind to let the poor creature know that she was to expect nothing more from the convent. However she continued to assist her, but so that the woman should not know that the alms came from her. She asked almost daily whether the poor woman had been to express her sorrow and promise amendment. In about a fortnight she did so, and was restored to favour, but though her relapses after this were many and frequent, Mother Barat's charity was never wearied out.

It was often taken in, however, and her doctor, who at

her request had visited some of her poor people, used frequently to tell her of the bad use made of her alms. "Really, doctor," she would say with much surprise. "Well, promise me you will go there again, to do them good."

Those about Mother Barat were persuaded that she heard at a distance the cry of souls in distress. A young girl, on her arrival in Paris, fell very ill at an hotel, and in the delirium of fever kept calling through a whole night on her "dear Mother Barat" not to forsake her. The next day Mother Barat sent to inquire for her, assuring her that she would always be a mother to her, and would never give her up. No one ever knew how she had heard of her arrival in Paris, her address, or her illness and anguish of mind. A Superior Vicar, Mother de Mandon, on going into Mother Barat's room one evening about six o'clock, found her sitting by her window looking anxious and preoccupied. She paid no attention to what was said to her, but interrupted the sentence begun with: "You will do me a great kindness, if you will ask for Masses for such a one of Ours, who has just died in Italy. She needs our prayers." She gave Mother de Mandon to understand that the person she mentioned had just appeared to her. Several similar facts are on record.

When the convent at Blumenthal was burnt down, in 1862, the first words she spoke, on hearing the news, were: "Was there then no soul of prayer in the house?"

CHAPTER XLV

SPIRITUAL LIFE

But keep thou thine [heart] a holy solitude,
For He who would walk there would walk alone,
He who would drink there must be first endued
With single right to call that stream His own ;
Keep thou thine heart close fastened, unrevealed,
A fencèd garden and a fountain sealed.

TRENCH.

IN following Mother Barat as we have done, year by year, through her long life, from one phase of trial to another, till we reach the haven of her calm old age, we have seen how she met and weathered each storm as it came, how she dealt with the souls of those entrusted to her, how she built up and organized her Society, but how little we know of herself! The secrets of her own soul were between herself and God, and manifested, as far as we are concerned, only by her actions. Not even after her death was there any revelation of her inner life, of those hidden springs whence flowed such copious streams of love, beneficence, and charity upon all who came within the reach of her "far-resonant action." She left no record of her thoughts, as thoughts.

Introspection, in the modern meaning of the word, there was none, because introspection, as such, is selfish in its aim and scope. Self-scrutiny, minute, relentless, uncompromising, there was, but in view of God, and for the purification of her soul. She prepared for her daily Communion, for many years, by daily confessions, and traces of her tears were often found upon the *prie-dieu*, where she knelt in the confessional. Towards the end of her life, she confessed only two or three

times a week. "I think I am beginning to be converted," she said once. "Ask God that my conversion may be entire, and that, like the rest of you, a weekly confession may be enough for me." Her least faults looked to her like crimes, and caused her the deepest sorrow.

This delicacy of conscience came from her intense love of God, and constant sense of His presence. We know nothing of how or when she began to practise meditation, but from the beginning of her religious life, we find her already favoured with those gifts in prayer which are usually the reward of long and persevering efforts. At Amiens and at Grenoble, her Sisters in religion were aware how completely she was sometimes lost in God. Mother Emilie Giraud relates how, once on a journey, at the end of a mid-day halt, she was nowhere to be found. She was sought for in all directions, and at last discovered, on her knees, hidden behind a bush. Her eyes and hands were raised to Heaven, and she seemed lost in ecstasy. It was with great difficulty that she was brought back to the knowledge of what was passing on earth, and she was absorbed in God the rest of the day. "How often," wrote one who lived much with her, "did we not find her bathed in tears, and so recollected that she neither saw nor heard what went on!"

One of her daughters, who was in close intercouse with her from 1833 to 1839, says: "She was raised to a very sublime degree of the prayer of union, and received much light as to the deep annihilation of the Incarnate Word.... She was then at a loss for words in which to speak of herself; to say that she was *nothing*, or *nothingness*, seemed all too weak. It might be likened to a trial of strength between love on our Lord's part, and humility on that of His servant, for He overwhelmed her the more with His favours, the more unworthy she deemed herself of them." Yet aridity followed, for, in a note written by Mother Barat in 1839, at the end of her annual retreat, and headed *Souvenirs à la suite de mes résolutions*, we find the following words: "I earnestly implore the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, to restore to me

by a gift of the mercy of Jesus Christ, the method of prayer I once had, and which I have lost by my long unfaithfulness."

Mother Barat always preferred humility to extraordinary supernatural favours. "I do not envy St. Gertrude her revelations," she once said, "but her love of God." She was speaking once to those about her of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, who, in her joy at being separated from the world, kissed the walls of her monastery, and then went into an ecstacy. "That is not what I want of you," she said. "How would the teaching and the supervision of the children get on? The right kind of ecstacy for us is that which takes us out of self, and makes us forget it."

She never spoke of what passed in her soul during her hours of prayer. "In spite of all I have to do, I manage to get six or seven hours prayer a day," she once said; then fearing she had gone too far for her humility, she recurred to the subject on the following day, and explained that as she slept little she spent her time at night in thinking of our Lord, adding: "And then in the afternoon I go again to my little tribune, but it is rather rest than prayer, and could not be called meditation."

At the end of the notes of Retreat referred to above is the following prayer, written out by Mother Barat, and taken, in a slightly altered form, from the works of Father Nouet: "Jesus, my sweetest life, hear this my earnest entreaty. Grant that I may die completely to myself that Thou alone mayest live in me. Grant that the silence within me may be like that of the dead, that Thou alone mayest speak to my heart. May I do nothing, that Thou mayest work in me all that Thou wilt." Her own interior life was epitomized in these words.

During one of her visits to the Trinità dei Monti she wrote the following:

What then is necessary for union with God? To will it: to give ourselves generously to Him; to live in perfect, absolute dependence upon grace. Our only desire must be, to be precisely and solely what God wishes us to be, and this involves nothing less than an entire surrender of ourselves and our interests into His Hands. When we have made this complete donation we have only to let God act upon us, and

correspond faithfully to His action : first, by letting our Superiors lead us like docile children, secondly, by minute fidelity to our Rules, Constitutions, customs, duties, &c.

"What is interior spirit?" she said, speaking to the community at Jette ; then answering her own question, she went on :

Interior spirit is the complete sacrifice of self by the mortification of the senses and the conquest of the passions ; it is the ever renewed recollection of the presence of God, for whom we act. Interior spirit is, therefore, intimate union of the soul with God, chaste fear of displeasing Him, immediate dependence upon the grace and secret inspirations of the Holy Ghost ; it is the delicate intuition of God's action which is given to the soul that it may respond thereto ; it is the complete stripping off of self. How peaceful, gentle, calm, dependent, humble, is one who is thus interior ; how full of self-devotion, how easy to get on with ! Her love for others and her zeal are commensurate with her love for God. She commits faults no doubt, but as she lives in dependence on the Holy Ghost, His Divine light soon shows her even the least imperfection.

Our Lord's life was the usual subject of Mother Barat's meditations, and she strove as far as possible to mould her own life on this model. It was striking to see how she identified herself with the spirit of the feasts of the Liturgical Year, as they came round. She had particular devotion to the preparation of Advent, and the mysteries of Christmas.

The mystery to me [she wrote once] is how, looking on the Crib and the Cross, a religious can ever cling to the pettiness of self-love. Our God, Eternal Wisdom, the Word of the Father, is reduced to silence, or utters only inarticulate cries, and lives in subjection to two of His own creatures, very perfect creatures no doubt, but still only creatures. And after this, can we not submit to Him in the person of our Superiors ! Let us lay down at His feet in the Crib our over-weening self-love, and promise the Divine Child that like Him we will obey unresistingly and at once, those who represent Him. . . . There are plenty of asylums in the world for the insane, and if the sight of the Crib does not cure our pride, we ought to go there.

After the Crib follows the Cross, and no one can follow Mother Barat many steps on her journey through life, without

learning something of her deep love for the mysteries connected with the Passion of our Lord. On Monday in Holy Week, she came once to the novices at Conflans, and said: "I am come, children, to die with you, to die the death of our Lord, to rise with Him to a new life." In 1859, she said to the probanists at the beginning of Holy Week: "We are going to indulge ourselves during this great week; indulge ourselves, I mean, in self-abasement, love, and sacrifice." On Maundy Thursday it was with very great humility that she washed the feet of the novices, and served them at table. On Good Friday it was impossible to withdraw her, during the time that the Three Hours' Agony lasted, from the contemplation of our Lord upon the Cross. When they were over, she seemed to revive. "At last He is free from pain," she exclaimed towards evening on one Good Friday. "It feels like coming back to life." And the sigh of relief that accompanied these words showed how heartfelt they were. In 1855, on the feast of the Five Wounds she said: "It seemed to me that this morning I saw the Precious Blood flowing plentifully over your souls from these Divine fountains, for if It was shed for all men, how much more must It inundate those who give themselves entirely to our Lord."

The history of the Passion affected her so deeply, that the practice of reading it in the refectory in her presence had to be discontinued. "When we study our Blessed Lord suffering in His Sacred Passion," she said one day in Holy Week, "we can only will to suffer and make reparation as long as the world shall last, and longer." The Paschal joy well-nigh transfigured her, so penetrated was she with the thought of the glory of the Resurrection. But the Blessed Sacrament was, as we have already seen, the centre of Mother Barat's life. "When you have received Holy Communion," says St. Teresa, "close the eyes of your body, open those of your soul and you will find Heaven there." It happened more than once that after Holy Communion, Mother Barat was carried, as it were, out of herself.

It was in vain [writes one of her daughters] that I called her, and even touched her. She looked at me, but did not see me. After a long

interval, as if coming back from a distance, she said : "Ah, you are there, my dear! . . . Yes, I must leave Him to do His work. It is leaving God for God."

I was one morning in the chapel, at the Feuillantines [wrote another], when, thinking herself alone, our Mother uttered fervent exclamations of love for our Lord. When at last she noticed that I was there, she asked me whether the bell for the end of thanksgiving had rung. It had done so three quarters of an hour before. Then she told me to shut the windows. I rose to obey, but remarked that, though it was a dull day, a wonderful light was shining round her. Was it to prevent me from noticing it, that she had told me to shut the windows?

All her devotions were subordinated in Mother Barat's mind to her great love for God. His Heart was all in all to her, but she never separated the Immaculate Heart of Mary from the Sacred Heart of her Son. "The Heart of Mary," she once said, "is the Court where the Assizes of Mercy are held." "Look on our Blessed Lady as your Superior," she used to say to her daughters, "and when obedience is hard, you may sweeten it by the thought that you are obeying her."

Mother Barat had a great trust in the protection of St. Michael. "We owe him a great deal," she said on the 29th of September, 1835, "much more than you think. He has always protected us, and preserved us from many dangers." In the convent at Chambéry, a tradition still lives that she received there a supernatural intimation that his protection would not fail her. She was there on September 29th, 1830, a time of much anxiety and danger, and heard Mass in a small oratory, dedicated at that time to the Sacred Heart. After a long thanksgiving she was met coming from the chapel with so radiant a countenance that one of her daughters inquired the cause of her joy. "I am happy now," she answered; "St. Michael will protect the Society." The way she said these words impressed upon her to whom they were uttered the idea that St. Michael himself had reassured her.

She loved to invoke the holy Angels, especially the Guardian Angels, and it was remarked that this devotion distinguished those who had been her novices at Poitiers.

Later on, a Congregation in their honour was established in every school. She wrote in 1829 : " It is generally by means of the Congregations of our Blessed Lady and the Holy Angels that fervour is maintained and spread among the children."

Amongst the saints to whom Mother Barat had most devotion were, after St. Joseph, SS. Peter and Paul, St. John the Evangelist, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Teresa, and Blessed Margaret Mary. " Her life was one act of love and self-humiliation," she said once, in speaking of the latter. The day of Blessed Margaret Mary's beatification, in September, 1864, Mother Barat came back from Conflans, where she had been to keep the feast of the Seven Dolours, and assist at a ceremony of Clothing. She spoke of the event solemnized that day in Rome, and called it " the triumph of humility." " I saw all those," she continued, " who took the habit to-day, and to all of them I recommended humility. It is the first step, the second step, and the third step to perfection. Why do you not give yourselves up to this great virtue ? Alas, I guess why. It is the old story of the fable :

> Dame Crab one day her child reproved
> For crooked, awkward gait.
> " We all go thus," was answer made ;
> " I ne'er saw you walk straight."

You might say as much to me. . . . Well, copy Blessed Margaret Mary. Perhaps you will then teach me to walk like you."

Pride of intellect, as she herself several times avowed, was incomprehensible to her. " Movements of pride, vain thoughts, I well understand," she said. " Every one knows them ; but a proud mind has always been a mystery to me."

Monseigneur Parisis, at his first visit to Mother Barat, talked of the good effected by the Society, and to try her remarked : " It would be a pity if you ascribed all this to yourself." He often said afterwards that he should never forget the gesture and tone of indignation with which she rejected the idea. " Oh, my lord, it would be horrible ! " she exclaimed, and he understood that not even a first movement

of pride could touch the soul of her whom God had made use of to work such great things.

Archbishop Hughes, of New York, who had a great veneration for Mother Barat, and always went to see her when he was in Paris, spoke much to her at his last visit, of the spread of the Society in the United States, and the good it did there. He showed that he attributed its success to her, and from that moment she looked very sad, and scarcely took any further part in the conversation, which, till then, had been animated on both sides. The Archbishop soon withdrew, and on his way downstairs, said to the religious who accompanied him to the door: "I see it does not do to praise your Mother General." "There is no more effectual way of silencing her," was the answer. When this religious returned to Mother Barat, she found her in tears. "Ah, my child," she said in a tone of heartfelt sorrow, "to attribute to a sinner like me the good done in the Society! I have only spoilt God's work. Pray that I may repair, before my death, the harm I have done."

She called her Society, "the little Society," "a Society of gnats, and worse than gnats, for we offend God." In 1865, a great-niece of Father Varin came to the Mother House for her probation, and Mother Barat said to her: "Your grand-uncle made a great mistake when he put me at the head of the Society. . . . However, it is possible that in this he was inspired by God, who willed to establish His work on the merest nothing. If your Mother is so little, what must you be?"

Every thing about Mother Barat was simplicity itself. Her room was furnished with bare necessaries. Once at Conflans, during a very cold winter, advantage was taken of her temporary absence to put up curtains in her room, which was much exposed, to make a few useful additions to the furniture, and to lay a square of carpet under her writing-table. On her return she made no remark, and those who had arranged it all were in hopes she would allow their work to stand. As soon, however, as she was alone, she removed every thing herself; and furniture (even a heavy chest of drawers), carpet

and curtains were left in a heap outside her door. "Will you be so kind," she said to the Sister when she came, "as to ask the Mother Procuratrix to set this passage in order. It is almost impossible to go in or out of my room." Her message was obeyed sadly but in silence, for fear lest any expostulation might only make matters worse.

Her clothes were old and patched, and she would wear no others. The Sisters were forbidden to remove the worn-out garments, or to replace one thing of hers by another, without her leave. She used to ask humbly for the pens, paper or work-materials she required, and would not keep any by her. She liked receiving them little by little, as alms. "We are poor people," she used to say, "and should act accordingly." She employed very sparingly all that belonged to the household stores, water, oil, wood, &c., and whenever she could do so, would avoid having a fire in her room. She liked to have the candle-ends kept for her own use, and would sit knitting by this feeble light.

Her hands were never idle, and she liked to see others busy also. If in conversation with her, a religious laid down her work: "You can tell me your story, and work at the same time," she would say; "these two things are compatible for poor people like us." Towards the end of her life she was unable, in spite of her indefatigable activity, to do much. "I scarcely knit more than three or four pairs of stockings in the year," she said once, "so you see I do not earn my bread, and am an expense to the Society."

All that came in her way was turned to mortification and penance, but she habitually did her best to conceal this. It was a maxim with her that "suffering borne in secret for love of our Lord is pleasing to Him." Yet sometimes the avowal escaped her almost unawares. "There was a time," she said to one of her daughters, "when I was so much inclined to impatience, that I found only one remedy; to take the discipline as hard, and for as long as I could. This was the only way I could calm myself." She blushed when she had said this fearing she had betrayed too much. At another time when

she was advising a Superior not to allow much use of the discipline to those of a nervous temperament, she added: "I am not nervous, but I confess that I cannot use it without bringing on such a fit of trembling, that it is ten minutes before I am able to write."

In Italy, it used to be remarked that she never made a movement to drive off mosquitoes, but let them even draw blood. She would refuse, as much as possible, the delicacies brought to her in her frequent illnesses. She always said: "I do not like it," or, "It is bad for me," and at last her meaning was understood. Once when she was ill, she left her bed, and was found kneeling on the tiled floor of her room. The infirmarian reproached her with this as an imprudence "Could I be unfaithful to grace?" she answered. "I left my bed because I was too comfortable in it."

One thing, however, is quite wanting to us when we try to make ourselves as complete a picture as possible of what Mother Barat was to those with whom she lived, for no portrait was taken of her during her life-time. On this point she was always inflexible. It was not easily that her daughters resigned themselves to the loss. When Cardinal Lambruschini was Papal Nuncio in Paris, Mother de Gramont once appealed to him in presence of the community on the subject, and though he heartily agreed that it was right and reasonable in the case of a Foundress and Superior General, he obtained nothing. Mother Barat listened in silence, whilst he gave detailed reasons for the obligation under which she lay to do as her daughters wished, and when all was over she very gently begged him to grant her the favour of a few minutes' conversation apart. They went into an adjoining room, and a considerable time elapsed. When they returned to the community the Nuncio said no more about the portrait. Mother Barat had won her cause.

A few years later, a further attempt was made—again through Cardinal Lambruschini. The Superior at the Trinità dei Monti besought His Eminence to give a positive order to this effect, even if it were to be asked for from the Pope

himself. But again, after a few minutes' conversation with Mother Barat, he refused. "I cannot," was all the explanation he vouchsafed.

Furtive attempts were made, from time to time, to produce a likeness, but Mother Barat's eyes were too well practised in observing what went on around her, to make it a safe or easy matter, and all ended in failure. When Mother Perdrau entered the Society, much hope was felt that she would succeed where others had tried in vain. But at the time of her entrance, in 1845, Mother Barat, who knew that she had painted portraits, spoke to her so strongly of her invincible repugnance, that she took the warning and made no request on this subject. A few years later when photography was just introduced, she learnt the art, and one fine June morning she planted a camera in Mother Barat's room intending to take her by storm at the first opportunity. "What is all this?" Mother Barat said in a severe tone when she first came in. Mother Perdrau explained, and added: "Reverend Mother, the whole Society implores you to consent. Would you give pain to three thousand hearts? Can you, who live but for their happiness, refuse?" "With all your fine speeches," was the answer, "you are preventing me from writing my letters. Take away your apparatus quickly." She turned her back upon the camera, as she spoke, and remained in that position.

"I burst into tears," Mother Perdrau says, "at seeing all my hopes frustrated, and the sight of my sorrow seemed to make her forget the camera. She sat down at her bureau, and for a moment I hoped again. But it was in vain. 'See, my child,' she said, 'you are altogether wide of the mark. My face is nothing. If you could photograph my affection for you all, that would be worth having.' Slowly and regretfully, I took away the apparatus, bit by bit, Mother Barat looking up every now and then from her letters, to see if my tears had stopped. When it was all done, she called me and said: 'I might well give you a good scolding, for having forgotten the promises you made me in Rome in 1845, but you

were so heart and soul in it, that I have not the courage.' As I was leaving, she said, with an arch smile : 'That is what one might call *un portrait manqué !*' "

The pictures that passed from hand to hand, purporting to be likenesses of Mother Barat, were often but wretched caricatures, that excited her daughters' indignation and her own amusement.

It is true hers was not an easy countenance to depict. The features were very delicate, even to extreme old age, expressing energy and decision of character, tempered with the utmost kindness. But it was a very mobile face, over which various emotions passed in rapid succession. The charm of her smile was irresistible. She had what has been called "that nameless grace, which hangs about some, and opens the way before them, like a royal letter." Her glance was full of life and animation, and any warmth of feeling sent a glow of colour to her cheek. Her gestures were easy and expressive, her walk so rapid and her step so light, that she seemed to be carried on wings. But though there was so much animation in every movement, there was no blind impetuosity. Her speech was always measured, exact, self-restrained, and showed how her soul was held captive under the Hand of God, whilst the atmosphere of humility and recollection that, as it were, shrouded her, inspired respect for her sanctity. In extreme old age, sleep almost forsook her, and her voice was scarcely audible. Her life seemed to be prolonged almost by a miracle, that she might be able to carry out to the full the work she had been appointed to do.

CHAPTER XLVI

LAST TRIALS

> All experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever, when I move.
>
> TENNYSON.

IN January, 1859, Mother Barat wrote: "There is no end to my work, although I devote whole days to it. My poor soul is often dried up, and then I exclaim: 'Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!' and I may add, in very truth, that my days on earth are long. I am in my eightieth year, and certainly I have never known less repose."

The cares and anxieties inseparable from the charge of the ever-increasing Society were, at this time, made more heavy by the results of the war between Sardinia and Austria; and the French successes, by securing to Sardinia the dominion over northern Italy, led to renewed persecution. The convent at Milan was the first to be attacked, but in spite of difficulties it held out until March, 1860, when it was swept away by the storm.

The Society had been re-established in Parma since 1855, at the request of the Duchess, who was the daughter of the Duc de Berri. In 1859, she and her children were forced to fly to Switzerland, and the convent was soon threatened. Mother Barat wrote to the Superior: "We must see the will of God in all that happens to us. If, therefore, you are turned out of Parma, you must go, but if you are not expelled, stay where God has placed you, to do the little you can by educating the poorer classes.... We must do what good comes

in our way. Life is so short, and our Lord bids us 'work while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work.' If the authorities seem to wish you out of the way, I think you had better enter into their views, and take yourselves off, for we have no wish to be a burden to any one."

The following month, she wrote again: "We must be everywhere and to every one angels of peace, never mix ourselves up in politics, and be always ready to help the suffering, if it is in our power." In the following March, conditions were laid down to which it was impossible to agree, and in June, the convent was closed.

In June, 1859, Mother Barat wrote to the Superior at Padua: "When you can, step into the background, keep silence, and pray. The less you are to the fore, the better. Nuns should be between Heaven and earth. *Sursum corda*.... But some circumstances cannot be foreseen, and then you must not only pray, but seek advice from prudent people. You undertook your charge from obedience, and our Lord will not fail you. This is the ground of your hope."

A hospital, or ambulance, was opened in the convent, for nursing the wounded soldiers. Mother Barat congratulated the nuns on this act of charity, and waited in patience to see what would be their fate. "The Sacred Heart will bless your efforts and your sacrifices," she wrote to the Superior, "and you will uphold your little reed. It will bend, but not break. Humility escapes all dangers." In the end, the convent escaped destruction.

In the autumn of 1860, the work of iniquity was accomplished, by the Piedmontese troops invading the Pontifical States, without any declaration of war, in utter disregard of any of the safeguards of the rights of nations. The brave defenders of the Pope's dominions met the enemy at Castelfidardo, and were routed, but their defeat was more glorious than a victory.

The battlefield was within sight of the convent at Loretto, and all day, as the fight went on, its varying fortunes brought joy or dismay to the beholders. At length the convent walls

were the last refuge of the Papal troops, who, one to ten, massed their cavalry and cannon beneath its windows, resolved if victory was impossible, at least, to resist to the last. Then only, did the nuns and children leave for St. Elpidio, and, a few days later, when they returned, they found Loretto held by Piedmontese troops. Their expulsion and that of the Jesuits followed immediately. On September 27th, they were ordered to evacuate their house before October 3rd. A few weeks later, the same fate befell St. Elpidio, and, within two years, the convent at Perugia was also closed.

All this was anguish for Mother Barat. On the 1st of January, 1861, she wrote: "In my long and sleepless nights I think over the numberless calamities that have befallen the Church." And again: "Let us go on not only praying, but expiating, by receiving the heavy crosses inflicted on us by God. The earth is flooded by a torrent of iniquity, and therefore the Great Victim wills to join others to Himself. Happy they who have deserved to be chosen!" The war in America between the Northern and the Southern States was for three years (1861–1864) another cause of intense anxiety, increased by the scarcity of news, as communication was frequently interrupted for long spaces of time.

Mother Barat wrote to Mother Lehon about this time:

> How these thoughts ought to inflame our love for the Sacred Heart, and our zeal for souls. How many will have fallen away, and yet what a host of the elect! We must prepare them by our teaching and by inculcating the devotion to the Sacred Heart. But if the salt loses its savour, if the torch burns dim and the lamps go out, woe to us! The Bridegroom will come in the night of this world. Let us work then more zealously than ever, first, for our own perfection, next for that of our Sisters, and then for that of the souls entrusted to us. The hope of the Church is in the young generation. The devil knows this only too well, and therefore strives so hard to deprive it of good education.

These later years of Mother Barat's life were full also of another trial, the loss of many to whom she looked to guide the work of the Society when she, and those who had directed

it hitherto had passed away. Before she died, fourteen hundred of her religious had preceded her into the other world. Amongst those whose loss at this time she wept over most bitterly, were Mother de Coriolis, a pupil of Mother Duchesne's, Superior at the Trinità, and, later, at Parma; Mother Toussenel, Superior at Charleville, Mother Emma de Bouchaud, Superior at Poitiers, and Mother Henriette Coppens. The latter died in Paris, on July 12th, 1863, "thankful," as she herself said, "to have devoted all the powers of her soul, for seventy-five years, to the love of our Lord." Another, who died about the same time, said: "I used to think that the day of First Communion was the happiest day of one's life, but now I have found out that the day of receiving Extreme Unction is still more happy."

The deaths of many religious of tried virtue and experience, and the great age of the Superior General, caused apprehension in the minds of some well-wishers of the Society of the Sacred Heart as to the future. They need not have feared, for Mother Barat had throughout her life guarded too well the interests of God's glory to be deserted by Him at the critical hour. Her successor was ready, and indeed had been formed by her.

When Mother Barat had been planning the organization of a Mother House at Paris, and establishing there the work of the probation under the superintendence of Mother Desmarquest, she intended also to place the house at Conflans, as well as the noviciate, in the hands of Mother Gœtz. When this decision was announced to the latter it fell upon her as a terrible blow, and, in her humility, she tried to escape a charge of which she held herself both unworthy and incapable. When she found that escape there was none, she resigned herself, but in the persuasion that a short trial would make every one see things as she did.

Mother Barat came herself to Conflans to make known the appointment which caused universal joy; and Mother Gœtz set herself to her new functions with characteristic adherence to her motto: "Duty first, duty always." Ever since her

appointment as Mistress of Novices she had been in very close relations with Mother Barat. She wrote to her every day, and sometimes three times in one day ; and the answers were not less frequent. Every year as it passed increased Mother Barat's confidence in her, until the time came for her to show to every one that it was to Mother Gœtz she looked for the assistance which her age made necessary. She once asked a person who from experience was a good judge of character, whom, if the choice were left to her, would she choose as Superior General. Mother Gœtz was named, and Mother Barat exclaimed with evident pleasure : "She wins all hearts : it is surprising how the most opposite minds are one about this. I, for my part, agree with you ; she is *anchored in humility*, and has *great breadth of mind*." Indications of a supernatural character are said to have been granted to Mother Barat on this subject. In 1825, she said one day at recreation at Poitiers : "I had such a shock last night. I was asking Almighty God when He intended to relieve me from the burden I have borne for twenty years. Do you know what my answer was ? 'Patience, your successor is not yet eight years old.' But it was only a dream," she added hastily. Josephine Gœtz was then aged seven years and a half.

In 1842, Mother Barat was speaking to a holy priest on the same subject, and she mentioned the name of one on whom she had founded great hopes, as possibly intended to succeed her. "No," was the answer, "your successor is still quietly working away in her school." Mother Gœtz was at that time sub-Mistress General at Besançon. When, in July, 1863, Mother Henriette Coppens died, Mother Barat judged the time had come to make use of the prudence and enlightenment of Mother Gœtz, in the government of the Society. She was named to replace Mother Henriette as Assistant General, though her nomination was not publicly known at first. In May, 1864, Mother Barat wrote to her : "The Sacred Heart of our Lord will supply what is wanting to you. For that you must tend to strip yourself of any thing personal in your action. Then our Lord will give you His own spirit, and He will act

upon you as He acted upon the Apostles. . . . Abyss calls to abyss; absolute nothingness attracts the Sovereign Good. The Sacred Heart of our Lord is given to us as our Model, and the Treasure-House of mercy. With such a Protector, what can we fear? Thus, the less we have, the more we shall hope!"

Two months after the death of Mother Coppens, Mother Desmarquest had a paralytic seizure. Her life was still in danger, when the religious who was her assistant in the charge of the probation, died suddenly. Mother Barat entrusted the probanists, for a time, to Mother de Limminghe, and shortly afterwards to Mother Gœtz.

The time fixed by the Constitutions for the next General Congregation had come, but until the civil war in America was at an end its convocation was impossible. Mother Barat earnestly desired to convene it, and she wrote to Mother Jouve:

> If I can form a wish, it is to gather once more together in this land of exile my old Mothers and daughters, who have so long been sharing my labours. Yes, I should like to see them again and speak to them of my gratitude, and recommend to those who will come after me to redouble their devotedness in consolidating the basis of religious virtues on which our Society rests: boundless humility, ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, generosity that no obstacle can arrest when the glory of God is concerned, and to secure this, union with, or at least a constant faithful tending towards the Heart of Jesus, the source of this life of sacrifice. If, therefore, peace returns, be ready, expect the call, for it will not be long in coming.

In March, 1864, Mother Barat saw her way to convene the assembly, which was appointed to meet in Paris in June of that year. In her letter of convocation, after tracing out the chief lines to be followed in treating of matters calling for the attention of the Congregation, she added: "Then, seeing the precious trust our Lord confided to me guarded by souls so desirous of preserving it intact, I shall be able to look upon my mission as finished, hoping that in time to come my faults will be atoned for and repaired, and our Lord glorified."

Mother Barat was at this time eighty-four years old, but

the prospect of the Council seemed to lift off some of the burden of her weight of years. "Strength and voice are failing me," she said to her daughters on May 22nd, of that year; "even my eyesight is going. The poor machine is falling to pieces, but what would that matter if the soul can collect its forces and grow more vigorous as the body weakens?" On the feast of the Sacred Heart she renewed her vows for the last time in public. On the eve, June 2nd, "Our race is nearly run," she said. "The goal is not far off. Let us strive with redoubled ardour. The nearer the sun is to its setting the more countries have been warmed and enlightened by its rays; and we, as our end draws near, should have more power to draw souls to God, and should multiply our efforts to win them for Him. We have lately had many crosses, and other trials are no doubt in store, but let us not be down-hearted. God will uphold our little Society."

The eighth General Congregation opened on June 17th, 1864. Mother Barat presided at every session, breathing her own spirit into its deliberations and decisions, yet all the while keeping as much as possible in the background, as though to accustom the Society to act without her.

Amongst the changes which date from this time was the establishment of a course of training in teaching for the young religious. The novices were to pass through it after making their vows. Mother Barat did not live to see this in working order, but the idea sprang from her.

The nomination of Mother Gœtz as Assistant General, which Mother Barat had provisionally made by her own authority, was confirmed by the Mothers of the Council, who elected her with Mothers Prevost, de Brou, and Lehon. Mother Desmarquest, at her own request, was allowed to resign her charge, the duties of which she had become too infirm to fulfil. Mother Barat was loath to accept the resignation of the life-long companion of her labours, but yielded to the reasonableness of the request.

She could not let the Council close its sessions without urging a similar plea in her own favour. To leave them freer

in their decision, she sent a verbal message to the assembled Mothers, most earnestly imploring to be allowed to lay down the burden she had borne for so many years. Surprise and emotion for a time mastered those to whom the message was brought, but when they had recovered breath it was only to return the unanimous answer: "*No.*" Mother Barat herself then entered the room where they were sitting, and in person pleaded in her own favour. She declared that her age and weakness made it impossible for her any longer to govern the Society alone. In case the Mothers persisted in their refusal, she would at least make use of the power conferred upon her by the last Papal Decree, to name a Vicar General to second and supplement her in the exercise of her functions.

The proposition was hailed with joy. It left Mother Barat at the head of her Society, whilst affording her a helper of her own choice, who, formed by her and initiated into all the details of government, seemed pointed out beforehand as her successor. The choice she made of Mother Gœtz for this office met with no opposition but from Mother Gœtz herself. The Congregation lasted a month, and was really the completion of Mother Barat's work. At this time the Society was composed of 3,500 religious, and of the hundred and eleven houses founded under her direction, eighty-six existed at that time.

Before her death, three others were added to the number; those of Concepcion in Chili, Liège, and Seville. Rarely in this world, where great works so often have to bear the flaw of incompleteness, has it been given to a foundress to leave behind her on this earth a work so firmly knit, so well prepared for future development. Not only was the body one in spirit, compact and perfectly organized, but the mind that had directed it hitherto had most admirably foreseen what was coming. Mother Barat's notes have ever since her death, now thirty-five years ago, been a storehouse of wise counsels for her successors, so that they have considered themselves, and have been in fact, but executors of her will.

When the Mother Councillors had all left Paris, Mother Barat's days resumed their ordinary tenor. She seemed

anxious to carry out certain measures adopted by the Council, and said: "I have still this to do, and that to finish off, and then I shall say my *Nunc dimittis*." Those who lived with her felt more and more, as time went on, that she would not be long amongst them. The portress going into her room one day in the early autumn, in answer to the bell, found her absorbed in God. She was looking upwards, her hands clasped and raised, and nothing could attract her attention. Every now and again the Holy Name escaped her lips, but with so wonderful a tone of love, that the impression produced on the listener was of deep veneration, almost of awe. The name of Jesus was followed by the words: "Heaven, Heaven!" and indeed its joys at that moment seemed shining over Mother Barat's ecstatic countenance. The involuntary spectator of this scene fell on her knees and remained for awhile near the writing-table at which Mother Barat was sitting. After some minutes, she lowered her eyes and became conscious that she was not alone. Then the look of radiant happiness changed to a kind of confusion. She pointed to the piles of business-papers, that covered her table, and said smiling, as if to pass it off: "Heaven is the reward of all this. I am sometimes so tired, that I am obliged to take a rest."

One who saw her in December writes that Mother Barat, who seemed more like a spirit than one still living in the body, told her over and over again to impress upon all her daughters the love of our Lord and of souls: to love souls as He loved them, that is even to self-sacrifice. She returned to the subject frequently, and seemed as if she could speak of nothing else.

In October, 1864, Mother de Limminghe left Paris for Jette. Mother Barat wrote to her on the 31st of this month:

You had scarcely arrived, my good and ever dearest child, when you thought of your Mother, and gave up to her your first moments of repose. You knew how I needed the comfort of hearing from you, and your letter, so resigned and so filial as it was, did indeed soften the cross of our separation, which will always be felt until we meet to part no more. Now, dear Addolorata, let us both have no other thought than to prepare for this last passage. Let us pray, and suffer, and

purify our hearts from what remains of nature, and if, as I would fain hope, the Sacred Heart of our Lord may will to let us see one another yet once more in this land of exile, it will be to unite our two hearts more closely, and with more holiness in the heart of Him, who is our centre and our love. Are we not in Him, and is it not by Him that we live? It is then by His Divine Spirit that we must act: consequently all for Him, and to procure His glory. Thus, then, placed for ever in this Divine centre of interior souls, you will do your work of expiation, and will draw down upon the Society the blessings of which it has such immense need if it is to correspond faithfully to God's designs upon it. What a task! What virtues we ought to practise! You are happy enough to be on the right road. Ah, pray to obtain the same grace for your Mother. May she have at least a little respite to prepare for death."

Mother de Limminghe long survived Mother Barat, and died at Jette, where her last years were spent, on the 19th of January, 1874. Even in her agony, she was heard to utter the characteristic words: "May I suffer more, O Lord, if thereby Thou art more glorified!"

It seems as if God left Mother Barat still awhile here below to enable her to make known to Mother Gœtz all her plans, her hopes and fears for the Society. She talked all over with her every day as long as her strength allowed, and laid on her the burdens that weighed most heavily; the gravest cares, the most complicated questions were now the share of the Mother Vicar General. If one of the Mothers Vicar came to speak to Mother Barat about the houses under her charge: "Wait," she would say, "Mother Gœtz must hear this; we must send for her;" and presently Mother Gœtz was in the room, listening to all and taking notes, penetrating herself with Mother Barat's views and wishes.

The winter of 1864–1865, Mother Barat's last winter on earth, was a time of much weariness and suffering. "I am a great deal of trouble to you," she said to those around her; "but patience, it will soon be over, and God will give you back a hundred-fold, what you do for His poor servant." Sorrow was added, for on her eighty-fifth birthday she lost Mother Gertrude de Brou, one of her Assistants General. On

January 2nd, 1865, she made an effort to offer the community her good wishes for the New Year. "The old year finished with the Cross," she said alluding to the death of Mother Gertrude, "and this one also begins with it. That gives me confidence that it will be a year of graces." She insisted again on the love of God. "When we write," she said, "we underline the words we deem of most importance. Well, dear children, these are the words I underline for you: *All, absolutely all for the Sacred Heart of Jesus.* If this characterizes our year it will be one that gives great glory to God. What is necessary is that each one should be humble, little, abject, in her own eyes. . . . I should like to be more with you, to see you oftener, but I am obliged to take precautions, and I find it easier to be resigned to my want of power now that God has provided for all," and she turned towards her Vicar General adding: "I am at rest."

The presence of Mother Gœtz was indeed a great source of repose of mind to Mother Barat, but her chief trust was higher. About this time one of the Mothers in conversation with her let fall an expression of anxiety about the future, when she would no longer be amongst them. Mother Barat said in a tone that could never be forgotten: "*Jesus, our Lord, is there.* He it is who has founded this little Society, and He also will preserve it. His will has done it all. It was no work of mine. I have marred, not made. I firmly trust He will not suffer another spirit than that of His Sacred Heart to slip in unperceived."

In March, she wrote her last circular letter to the Society. "As long as our Lord grants me the slight thread of life that is passing from me little by little, it will be more than ever consecrated to your service. . . . If I did not fear to weary you," she added, "by saying the same thing so often, I should conjure you to ground all your resolutions on our Lord's favourite virtue, humility. . . . It unites us to the Sacred Heart, for our Lord will acknowledge as His own only those who are humble."

The spring seemed to bring fresh life to Mother Barat,

and Mother Gœtz, seeing with joy this renewal of health and strength, said : " Our Mother General will live ten years yet." Perhaps she secretly hoped to die before her. But nothing in Mother Barat's letters or conversations suggested that she shared this illusion.

Just at this time the convent at Amiens was rebuilt.

I want to see the place once more [Mother Barat wrote in 1860, when the demolition was decreed]. Such touching recollections hang about those old walls ! May they live for ever in our hearts ! If the love of the Sacred Heart is burnt into our souls, we shall have no need to regret the loss of the material building.

I love it only the more [she wrote, a little later] as the years go on, and carry that time further back. Thus extremes meet.

To perpetuate the memory of past times, a small chapel was erected on the spot once occupied by the old rooms. It was dedicated to our Lady under the title of *Notre-Dame-du-Berceau*. The large chapel of the convent was intended as a thank-offering, and Mother Barat hoped to have been present at the opening. But when the time came, she was already with God.

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CHAPTER XLVII

LAST DAYS AND DEATH. 1865.

* * * * *
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
* * * * *
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die.

CRASHAW, *on St. Teresa.*

MOTHER BARAT'S letters during the first months of 1865 show how constantly before her mind was the thought that her life was near its close. On March 23rd, she wrote to her nephew: "Do not forget me at your daily Mass. I am nearing the end. I am very old, and my failing strength shows that death is not far off. Help me to obtain mercy from our Lord. I shall have great need of it."

On April 29th, she wrote to Mother Victoire de Joigny: "How quickly the years fly by! When the end comes, it makes us very happy to have fought and to have loved and imitated Jesus, meek and humble of Heart. I do not think you will live to eighty-five, like your Mother General. Well, this long life looks to me like a dream, compared to eternity. Let us hasten to fill our remaining days with virtues, graces, and merits. It will be by conflicts, no doubt, but they will go so quickly that we ought to think nothing of them."

On May 9th, Mother Barat sent to the Mistress of the Junior School at the Rue de Varenne, to say that she had some presents for the little ones, and would like to see them, twenty at a time. The chosen band, full of the importance of their mission,

passed, at half-past twelve that day, through the gate that separates the garden of the Rue de Varenne from that of the Mother House. Mother Barat was on the terrace waiting for them, and, when she saw them coming, she went down the steps towards the cedar-tree, the children escorting her with pride and delight. So close did they gather round her when she was seated beneath its branches, that some of them rested their clasped hands on her knee, and she would not allow them to be prevented from doing so.

She looked them over: "I will not count you," she said, for I am afraid your Mother has cheated a little, and I do not want to find there is one too many [there were in fact twenty-nine]. I have been looking forward since the morning to seeing you." "And we too," said a little girl, who on account of her name, Madeleine, used to call Mother Barat her godmother. "Well, little Madeleine," Mother Barat rejoined, "I love you very much too, and I often pray to our patron saint for my godchild."

Another little one whispered a secret into Mother Barat's ear, to fulfil a commission with which she had been entrusted. Mother Barat listened with a pleased smile, and then, turning to the religious at her side, said in a low voice: "It is delicious to see these important airs in a tiny child like this."

When all this was over, the conversation became general again. "Your first bit of business," Mother Barat said, "is to eat these rosy-cheeked apples." The children thought of their absent companions, and were keeping some of the fruit for them, but Mother Barat told them to finish all, for she had more for the others. She then spoke of those who were to make their First Communion on Corpus Christi, and invited them to come, on the following Sunday, to Benediction in the chapel of the Mother House. "These dear First Communicants," she said, "I know they like to come to the Mother House, and especially to kneel in the stalls. And you," she said to the little flock before her, "you must promise me to say to Almighty God every evening: 'Grant, my God, that I may die rather than offend Thee by mortal sin.' Sin," she continued,

"what do you think of sin which wounds the Sacred Heart and prevents us from being with God after our death?" All protested energetically their hatred of sin. "That is right, dear children," Mother Barat continued; "and then we shall all meet in that beautiful Heaven, where our Blessed Lady, whom I am sure you love, will also be."

On saying good-bye, after visiting the garden "Grotto of St. Mary Magdalen," they all spontaneously and silently knelt down for her blessing, the last blessing Mother Barat was destined to give to children, whom she loved so dearly, and to whose welfare her life had been devoted. She wrote the next day to Mother Prevost: "Your children yesterday were a delightful sight. Their open, innocent faces are plain proof that God is in their hearts. The fruits of life brought forth in souls by our instructions are reward for all our labours."

On May 17th, Mother Barat visited the Rue de Varenne, and spoke to the community on the words of the Canticle of Canticles: "Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines." She used it as a theme on which to base her earnest injunctions against allowing the soul to be overrun, as it were, by faults and imperfections. "If you keep free from these," she said, "you will rejoice and console the Heart of our Lord. He will gather the fruits of your vine, fruits of humility. No virtue is solid without humility; it should be the characteristic and marking virtue of a religious of the Sacred Heart. You might tell me I do but repeat myself, and that I am always harping on that theme. It is quite true, and if our Lord grants me a few more days of life, I shall again speak to you of this virtue."

On Sunday, May 21st, all the religious were assembled at one o'clock in the room on the ground-floor at the Mother House given up to the probanists. It was some time since Mother Barat had been amongst her daughters on an occasion like this, and great was the joy of every one at seeing her come in. "I was most anxious to come to you to-day," she said, "for on Thursday we are going to Heaven." Thursday, May 25th, was the feast of the Ascension, and her words were taken as an allusion to the spirit in which that festival should be kept.

She was full of life and animation. Some of her daughters were at a distance from her, and she bade them draw near. "I do not like any of you to be so far off," she said, and added that as it was some little time since she had seen them, and as each day was given to us to improve, she counted on much progress having been made. After this, she encouraged her daughters not only to teach well, but to bring up the children in the fear of God. On leaving the recreation room she spoke to the lay-sisters whom she met on her way, and begged them "to pray for her when she should be no more."

The next day, Monday, May 22nd, Mother Barat rose as usual at five o'clock, and began her hour's meditation. At half-past six the infirmarian knocked at her door. She had been told to come then to say how Mother Gœtz, who was ailing, had passed the night. Although no answer was given she opened the door and found Mother Barat kneeling at her *prie-dieu* holding the crucifix in her hands, and so absorbed in prayer that she heard nothing. After waiting in vain for a few minutes the infirmarian was just going, when Mother Barat turned towards her with a smile of wonderful sweetness, and asked her what she wanted. She listened with the greatest interest to the report, and gave some detailed directions as to what was to be done.

Mother Barat assisted at Mass at seven o'clock, and continued her prayers till half-past eight. At that time she went back to her room. She looked over her letters and sent some to Mother Gœtz, with the request that she would come to her at nine o'clock to talk things over.

Shortly afterwards, a Sister came into her room, and Mother Barat complained to her of not feeling well. Then putting her hand to her head with a quick movement, she exclaimed: "Oh, my head, my head," and seemed about to lose consciousness. Mother Gœtz was immediately called, and Mother Barat answered her first anxious question as to where the pain was. "In my head," she said with an effort. When Mother Gœtz proposed applying a blister, Mother Barat said: "You will do well." She tried to say more, but could no longer articulate.

Three doctors were summoned, and found congestion of the brain. Remedies were applied at once, but in vain. Mother Barat lay motionless with closed eyes. She never spoke again.

Long before, she had said: "If God hears my prayers, there will be no last words of mine to repeat when I am dead, for I shall say nothing at all."

Yet the expression of her countenance showed that she was fully conscious, and Father Gamard, S.J., her confessor, gave her absolution for all the sins of her life. In the course of the morning, as the danger was imminent, Extreme Unction was administered, and she received the Holy Viaticum in a spoonful of water. Her face at that moment was lit up with ecstatic joy.

The next day, towards one o'clock, those watching at Mother Barat's side saw that when the Litany of Loretto was recited aloud she clasped her hands, and even tried to strike her breast each time the *Agnus Dei* was repeated. Her holy-water stoup was brought close to her, and she dipped her finger into it, then raised her hand and, with assistance, made the sign of the Cross. Father Gamard then said: "Reverend Mother, if you are aware I gave you yesterday absolution for all the sins of your life, answer me by pressing Mother Gœtz's hand." An energetic pressure was the response, and again when she was asked whether she knew she had received the last sacraments, and fulfilled the conditions for gaining the Jubilee.

When the doctors had satisfied themselves that these movements gave sign of true consciousness, one of them asked her to bless Mother Prevost, who had just arrived, and to raise her hand as a sign that she understood. The hand was at once raised.

Mother Gœtz, then, encouraged by what she saw, asked for a blessing for the whole Society. The quick movement in response drew tears from the eyes of all. "Have you not a blessing for us also?" one of the doctors asked, but no movement followed, and a repetition of the request was in vain. It seemed to her, no doubt, that she had no right to bless any but her own daughters.

"The following night was very bad," Mother Gœtz relates. "Prayers were said aloud at intervals, and Mother Barat showed that she joined in them, by striking her breast at the *Agnus Dei*, pressing to her heart, and sometimes raising to her lips, the little crucifix she held in her hands. If it slipped from between her fingers, she would search for it, and when she had recovered it, would turn it so that the face of our Lord was towards her. When the holy-water stoup was offered to her, there was something of her old quickness of movement, in the way she dipped in her finger." On the morning of the 24th, she received the blessing of the Holy Father, transmitted, in answer to Mother Gœtz's request, by Mgr de Mérode.

As the slow hours passed on, she grew weaker by degrees, and on the afternoon of the feast of the Ascension, Thursday, May 25th, the failing pulse showed that the end was near. Mothers Gœtz, Cahier, and Lehon had continued their anxious watch with little interruption, night and day, since the attack, and throughout the afternoon of the 25th, they scarcely ventured to lose sight of the peaceful countenance that lay so still before them, fearing that each slight sign of life might be the last.

Father Gamard was there too, saying at intervals the Church's prayers for the departing soul, and from time to time giving another absolution. About half-past nine the breathing became slower and fainter, and at last scarcely perceptible. At eleven o'clock precisely, without a struggle, Mother Barat gave up her soul to God.

The feast of the Ascension was not over. It was still the Thursday of which she had said: "On Thursday we are going to Heaven."

No papers were found after her death that could reveal the secrets of her own soul. All had been most carefully destroyed. When Mother Gœtz opened the little box where Mother Barat kept her private notes, it was empty, except for a document which had evidently been left intentionally, to be read when she was gone. It was dated April, 1863, and

was drawn up as though to form her last will and testament. It was intended for the Mothers forming the Council of the Society, but some parts of it were read to all. The *compte-rendu* is full of the deepest self-contempt, and totally ignores her own great spiritual and administrative gifts.

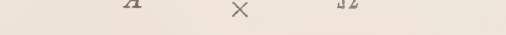
"I have full confidence," she wrote, "that those who come after me, as well as all the members of this dear family of the Sacred Heart will profit by my avowals, will repair the shortcomings which I deplore, and will redouble their zeal in strengthening true religious spirit, especially in what concerns humility, our Lord's darling virtue, poverty, its twin-sister, and lastly obedience, the bond and guardian of all the others, which, if they reign, will ensure the prosperity and the very existence of the Society.

"I ought to ask for prayers. I expect them from your charity. I venture above all to rely upon the intention which I read in your souls to maintain fidelity to our holy Rules at the cost of any sacrifice, to do your utmost to spread the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and lastly to become, wherever we may be, the 'good odour of Jesus Christ,' whose Name, in spite of our unworthiness, we bear. Thus will you make good the many faults and negligences of your first Mother, for which again she begs your pardon.

"I thank you for the care you have so long bestowed upon me, and if God in His mercy soon calls me to Himself, I shall pray fervently that He may reward you for every thing. I beseech Him to bless you all, and to engrave deeply in your souls, the will and constant longing to immolate yourselves to your last breath to the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and for His sake, to the salvation of souls, according to the end of your vocation."

A last resting place had been prepared for Mother Barat at Conflans, in a crypt beneath the chapel of our Lady of the Seven Dolours. There she was laid, on Monday, May 29th, 1865. The following inscription was placed upon the marble slab that closed the entrance: "Here rests in the peace of Christ, Madeleine Louise Sophie Barat, Foundress of the

Society of the Virgins of the Sacred Heart, which she governed for sixty-two years with admirable suavity and prudence. In proportion to its extension and its prosperity did her self-abasement increase. She attributed all its success to God. She died on the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, the 25th of May, 1865, aged eighty-five years, five months, and thirteen days. Hail and farewell, good Mother. Live in God, and do not forget your children in the Sacred Heart."



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